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CONTENTS

17 February 1995

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Arab-Israeli Talks

- 'Arafat, Rabin Begin Talks at Erez Checkpoint 1
  - Redeployment, Elections on Agenda *[Jericho VOP]* 1
  - Israel Agrees To Lift Closure *[Jericho VOP]* 1
  - 'Arafat Adviser Kanafani Comments *[Jerusalem TV]* 1
  - Rabin, Peres Hold News Conference *[Jerusalem Radio]* 1

Islamic Affairs

- Political Islam Review: AL-NUR 8 Feb 3
- OIC Calls On Afghan Factions To Support UN Peace Moves *[SPA]* 5
- Article Examines Extremism, Democracy *[London AL-MAJALLAH 11 Dec]* 5

Palestinian Affairs

- PA Ministers View Outcome of 'Arafat-Rabin Talks 8
  - Al-Tarifi Says Israel Procrastinating *[Cairo International]* 8
  - Quray' Details Issues Discussed *[Jericho VOP]* 9
  - Quray': Talks 'Less Than Our Expectations' *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 10
- 'Arafat Briefs Jordanian Prime Minister on Erez Meeting *[Jericho VOP]* 11
- Hamas Announces Acquisition of Warhead-Outfitted Missiles *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 11
- Hamas Reacts to Authority's 'Secret Plan' *[AL-SABIL 14-20 Feb]* 11

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

- Opposition Coalition Calls For Opposing Fundamentalists *[AFP]* 13
- Well-Known Rai Musician Assassinated Near Home *[Paris TV]* 13
- 'Mujahidin' Entering From Arab Countries Arrested *[London AL-HAYAH 15 Feb]* 13
- Court Orders Dockers To Unload 'Dangerous' Goods *[Algiers Radio]* 14
- Higher Education Federation Calls Off Planned Strike *[Algiers Radio]* 14
- Commerce Ministry Introduces Import Licenses *[Algiers Radio]* 14
  - Official Explains New Licenses *[Algiers Radio]* 14
- Gas Agreements Signed With Portugal *[Algiers Radio]* 14
- Protocol Accord on Cooperation Signed With Mali *[Algiers Radio]* 15

Egypt

- Mubarak Reacts to Israeli Leaders' Remarks *[Cairo Radio]* 15
- MENA Cites Mubarak on NPT, Israeli Ties 16
- Musa Discusses U.S. Visit, Talks in Germany *[MENA]* 17
- Papers View Mubarak's Remarks, Stance on Treaty *[MENA]* 18
- Mubarak Speaks With Libya's al-Qadhdhafi *[Cairo Radio]* 18
- Police Sentry Shot Dead in Mallawi *[MENA]* 18
- Embassy Official: Country's Only Threat 'Terrorism' *[London THE INDEPENDENT 13 Feb]* 18
- Paper Criticizes NATO Remarks on Islamic Fundamentalism *[MENA]* 19

Technical Fund Donates $1 Million in Aid to Sarajevo *[AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I 11 Feb]* ... 19
Al-Azhar Shaykh: Militants Must Be Killed or Maimed *[AL-AKHBAR 8 Feb]* ... 19
 Denounces Advocates of 'Caliphate' System *[MENA]* ... 20

Libya

Report of Offer of Aid to Somalia's Aidid Denied *[JANA]* ... 20
Algeria's Dembri Delivers Message to al-Qadhdhafi *[Tripoli TV]* ... 20
 Comments on Visit, Departs *[Tripoli Radio]* ... 20
Commentary Regrets AMU Acceptance of UN Sanctions *[Tripoli TV]* ... 21

Sudan

Friendship Council Official Accuses U.S. of 'Malice' *[SUNA]* ... 21
Minister Taha Briefs Envoys on Foreign Policy *[SUNA]* ... 21
Minister To Attend Geneva Human Rights Conference *[Omdurman Radio]* ... 22

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Saudi Arabia To Mediate Bahrain-Qatar Land Dispute *[AFP]* ... 23
 Qatar Hails 'Legal Victory' in Dispute *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 16 Feb]* ... 23

Bahrain

Amir, Heir Propose Formulas for Settlement With Qatar *[London AL-HAYAH 16 Feb]* ... 24
Heir Apparent Welcomes Qatari Stand on Border Dispute *[WAKH]* ... 24

Kuwait

Envoy: Oil Derivative Exports to Iran To Increase *[KUNA]* ... 24
Shaykh Sa'd Hears Journalists' Views on Civil Service Law *[Kuwait Radio]* ... 25

Saudi Arabia

Government Satisfied With Bahrain-Qatar Talks *[SPA]* ... 25
CDLR Bulletin No. 34 on Saudi Events *[London CDLR MONITOR 10 Feb]* ... 26
CDLR Press Release on Saudi Events *[London CDLR MONITOR 15 Feb]* ... 28

Yemen

Al-Iryani Views Border Talks With Saudi Arabia *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* ... 29
Salih Comments on Saudi Dispute, Negotiations *[Sanaa Radio]* ... 32
Riyadh Talks 'Proceeding Well'; Only 'Minor' Disagreements *[London AL-HAYAH 15 Feb]* ... 33
Cabinet Views Economic, Security Situation *[Sanaa Radio]* ... 33
Salim Salih on War's Aftermath, Border Dispute *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 23 Jan]* ... 34

IRAQ

UN Informed of Details of 'Fresh' Iranian 'Attack' *[Baghdad Radio]* ... 36
Group Says Mujahidin, Army Elements Staged Attack *[London AL-HAYAH 16 Feb]* ... 36
Kuwaiti Paper Reports Arrests of Air Force Officers *[AL-WATAN 9 Feb]* ... 36
KDP Role in 'Conspiratorial Scheme' Seen *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* ... 37
UN Ambassador Comments on Kurdish Fighting *[INA]* ... 37
PUK Radio: Barzani Artillery Pounds Complex Near Irbil *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* ... 38
PUK Claims KDP, Hezbollah Fail To Capture Rawandoz *[IRNA]* ... 38
Paper Reports on 'Thefts' by Kurdish Warring Factions *[AL-'IRAQ 4 Feb]* ... 38
Iran's Rafsanjani Urged To Stop 'Torture' of Iraqi Refugees *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 16 Feb]* ... 39
Islamic States Urged To Help Release Assets for Pilgrims *[INA]* ... 39
Minister Returns After Visit to Sudan, Libya, Tunisia *[INA]* ... 40
BABIL Reports Arrest of WTC Bombing Suspect *[11 Feb]* ... 40
UK Representatives Arrive, Prepare for Businessmen's Visit *[INA]* ... 40

ISRAEL

- Peres, Egypt's Musa To Work on Lowering Tension ... 41
  - Peres Considering New Gesture *[HA'ARETZ 17 Feb]* ... 41
  - Peres Leaves for Paris *[Jerusalem Radio]* ... 41
- Former UN Envoy: No Surprise in Musa's 'Insensitivity' *[THE JERUSALEM POST 13 Feb]* ... 41
- Rabin, Peres Briefed by U.S.'s Gallucci on Nuclear Issues *[HA'ARETZ 16 Feb]* ... 42
- Peres Attacks al-Asad Remarks on Rabin 'Weakness' *[Tel Aviv Radio]* ... 42
- Senior Analysts View al-Asad's Stance on Peace *[HA'ARETZ 16 Feb]* ... 43
- Palestinians Taking 'More Serious' Action on Security *[HA'ARETZ 16 Feb]* ... 43

JORDAN

- King Husayn Denounces Violence in Islam's Name *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* ... 44
- Israeli Goods To Attract 'High' Customs Duties *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 16 Feb]* ... 44
- Minutes of Agricultural Talks With Palestinians Signed *[Amman TV]* ... 44
- Iranian Envoy Emphasizes 'Depth' of Ties *[Amman Radio]* ... 44
- Minister Cited on Sudan, Libya, Tunisia Visits *[INA]* ... 45
- Foreign Minister Meets UN Secretary General *[PETRA-JNA]* ... 45
- Columnist Views Claes' Comments on Islam *[JORDAN TIMES 14 Feb]* ... 45
- IMF Approves $54 Million Loan for Economic Reform *[AL-DUSTUR 15 Feb]* ... 47

LEBANON

- Prime Minister al-Hariri Rejects 'Incomplete' Peace *[Beirut Radio]* ... 48
- League Chief Meets Birri, Comments on Peace *[VOL]* ... 48
- Nasrallah Warns Israel Against War in Lebanon, Syria ... 48
  - Says U.S.-Israeli 'Network' Exposed *[Voice of the Oppressed]* ... 48
  - War Could Set 'Entire Region Aflame' *[VOL]* ... 49
  - Says Hizballah 'Capitulation' Gone Forever *[Voice of the Oppressed]* ... 49

SYRIA

- Pessimism Over Peace Process Progress Reported *[AL-ITTIHAD 10 Feb]* ... 50
- Press on Christopher's Statements, U.S. 'Responsibility' *[Damascus Radio]* ... 51
- Commentary: Peace Hopes 'Diminishing Every Day' *[Damascus Radio]* ... 52
- Washington Talks 'Failure,' Implications Viewed *[London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI 14 Feb]* ... 52
- Iranian Envoy Confirms Support for Resistance *[Voice of the Oppressed]* ... 53

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

- UN Delegation Arrives for Power Transfer Preparations *[Tehran International]* ... 54
- Taleban Force Reportedly 9 Miles From Kabul *[AFP]* ... 54
- Taleban, Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami Agree on UN Plan *[Tehran Radio]* ... 54
- Islamic Unity Party Repulses Attacks *[Tehran Radio]* ... 55
- Jalalabad Council Opposed to Taleban Invasion *[AFP]* ... 55
- Kabul Airport Repaired, Ready for Flights *[Kabul Radio]* ... 56

India

- Editorial Says U. S. Should 'Tame' Pakistan *[NAVBHARAT TIMES 15 Feb]* ... 56
- Editorial Sees Bias in International Trade, UN *[JANSATTA 15 Feb]* ... 56
- Editorial Cites Benefits of World Bank Loan *[THE ECONOMIC TIMES 13 Feb]* ... 57
- Amnesty International's Accusations Viewed *[NAVBHARAT TIMES 2 Feb]* ... 57
- Article Cites 'Slumping' Economic Trend *[JANSATTA 14 Feb]* ... 58
- ModiLuft Airline Urges Aviation Improvements *[THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 13 Feb]* ... 59
- Accord To Set Up Steel Group Signed With PRC *[Delhi Radio]* ... 60
- Weapons Smuggling Linked to Election Violence *[THE PIONEER 13 Feb]* ... 60

Iran

Rafsanjani Accused of 'Suppressing' Opposition 60
Ministry Views Arab League Proposal *[Tehran Radio]* 61
SALAM Column Reflects Economic, Social Problems 61
  1995 Series, Number 1 *[15 Jan, etc.]* 61
Interior Minister Responds to KEYHAN Questionnaire *[KEYHAN 5 Feb]* 63
West's, NATO's Assessment of Islam Rejected *[TEHRAN TIMES 12 Feb]* 64
Azeri Ambassador on U.S. Criticism of Oil Deal *[TEHRAN TIMES 8 Feb]* 65
Gingrich Remarks Said Made in 'Inebriated State' *[RESALAT 13 Feb]* 65
Foreign Ministry Summons Afghan Envoy *[IRNA]* 66
'Bright Horizon' for North African Relations *[TEHRAN TIMES 9 Feb]]* 66
DPK Issues Statement on Arrest of Two Kurds *[Voice of Iranian Kordestan]* 67
Norway's 'Childish' Policy Criticized *[KEYHAN 8 Feb]* 67
Karun River Dam Construction Near Completion *[Tehran TV]* 68

Nepal

Minister Puts Famine 'Threat' on Europe Agenda *[AFP]* 68

Pakistan

Home Minister Denies Aimal Kansi in Balochistan *[DAWN 16 Feb]* 69
Editorial Suggests Ways To Meet Defense Needs *[JANG 8 Feb]* 69
  Antisubmarine Weapon Production *[JANG 15 Feb]* 70
Joint Military Exercises With India Rejected *[NAWA-I-WAQT 4 Feb]* 71
Foreign Office Denies Holding Indian POW's *[THE NATION 13 Feb]* 71
Seismic Center To Monitor Indian Nuclear Program *[Islamabad International]* 72
Committee Formed To Monitor Foreign Projects *[Islamabad Radio]* 72
Local, Foreign Firms Involved in Power Generation *[THE PAKISTAN TIMES 13 Feb]* 72
Cabinet Condemns Kashmir Governor's Rule Extension *[Islamabad Radio]* 73

Arab-Israeli Talks

'Arafat, Rabin Begin Talks at Erez Checkpoint

Redeployment, Elections on Agenda

JN1602145395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin are meeting now at the Erez checkpoint. Participating in the meeting for the Palestinian side is Economy Minister Ahmad Quray', known as Abu-'Ala', and, for the Israeli side, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. The Palestinian-Israeli summit will discuss the redeployment of the Israeli occupation forces and the Palestinian legislative elections.

Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary of the National Authority, told our radio that the Palestinian side agrees to a gradual redeployment of the Israeli occupation forces according to a specific, short-term timetable, provided that the redeployment is completed in all West Bank areas within no more than three months.

Israeli sources said the Israeli prime minister plans to announce the gradual lifting of the military siege imposed on the Palestinian territories during today's summit.

Israel Agrees To Lift Closure

JN1602175495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO and chairman of the Palestinian National Authority, has met with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin at the Erez checkpoint. The meeting was also attended on the Palestinian side by Dr. Nabil Sha'th and Economy Minister Ahmad Quray', also known as Abu-'Ala'. On the Israeli side, the meeting was also attended by Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres.

Economy Minister Ahmad Quray' said that Israel today agreed to lift the closure imposed on the Palestinian territory gradually, as of next week. Quray' noted that the Israeli prime minister informed President Yasir 'Arafat of this decision during the meeting. Quray' added that approximately 15,000 Palestinian workers—10,000 from Gaza and 5,000 from the occupied West Bank—will be able to enter into Israel.

Quray' said Rabin and 'Arafat agreed to accelerate the talks on the relocation of the Israeli Army in the West Bank. Quray', who took part in the 'Arafat-Rabin meeting, noted that Israel also agreed on the daily passage of 120 trucks from Gaza and 50 trucks from the West Bank to transport commodities to Israel.

Quray' said that another meeting will be held within three weeks between President 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. He added that 'Arafat and Rabin will meet again after one week to assess the situation of the talks.

Concluding his statement, Quray' said Israel has not taken any decision regarding the release of Palestinian detainees. However, he added, a date will be fixed next week to discuss this issue between Israel and the PLO.

'Arafat Adviser Kanafani Comments

TA1602174695 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Interview with 'Arafat adviser Marwan Kanafani by Hasan Abu-Zayid in Gaza on 16 February following Erez meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Palestinian Authority head Yasir 'Arafat—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Kanafani] They discussed many issues and reached agreement and understanding on some of them, which require... [pauses] I will not discuss this in detail now, but agreement was reached for the meetings to continue whether on today's level or on the level of the relative Palestinian-Israeli political and technical committees.

[Abu-Zayid] Would you describe the meeting as positive?

[Kanafani] I will not discuss nor describe the meeting.

[Abu-Zayid] Mr. Marwan, can you brief us about some of the issues on which agreement was reached?

[Kanafani] I can tell you about the issues that were discussed. They are basic issues which the Palestinian side raises, such as the redeployment of Israeli forces, elections, settlements, and the Gaza closure. Everyone is aware of the clear Palestinian position on these basic issues.

[Abu-Zayid] What about the security siege, the closure?

[Kanafani] This issue was also discussed.

Rabin, Peres Hold News Conference

TA1602151195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1440 GMT 16 Feb 95

[News conference by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres with domestic correspondents at Bet Berl college in Kfar Saba following their meeting with PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat at the Erez junction—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Rabin] We, Peres and I, met with Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] and 'Arafat today, following last week's meeting, with the intention of finding solutions to the major problems facing us. Both sides are committed to the Declaration of Principles agreement, the proper implementation of Gaza-Jericho First, and the execution of another stage in the accord.

We agreed, on the one hand, to intensive negotiations with the aim of overcoming the different positions on security, elections, redeployment, and transfer of powers. We continued, of course, to demand from the

Palestinian Authority [PA] that it carry out its responsibility in the security field in the areas under its control, that is, Gaza and Jericho. In view of PA activity, and because we want that activity to increase, we agreed that starting next week we will permit 10,000 workers from Gaza above the age of 30, whom we know, and 5,000 from Judaea and Samaria, to cross into Israel. On the one hand, we will continue to be concerned with the security issue and continue to demand that the PA fulfill its responsibility for security, and on the other hand, we will of course continue the negotiations. These are the facts. Shim'on.

[Peres] The meeting lasted about two hours. We can call it a good working session. It opened with the prime minister reiterating that for us the main issue has been and remains the security issue. The prime minister appreciated the fact that the PA has made an effort to take violence and terrorism seriously, although we are calling for an additional effort, and we will take into consideration only the outcome.

Three issues were on the agenda. One, as the prime minister has already said, was that there will be intensive negotiations and that we will meet again in another four weeks to see what progress has been made on those issues. The meeting will be between 'Arafat and the prime minister. A week earlier, I will meet in order to see how things are progressing by then. [sentence as heard] 'Arafat, for his part, said that they are taking the security issue seriously. I will quote what he said without expressing any opinions. He said they prevented six planned terrorist attacks against Israel. He said he appointed six prosecutors to the security affairs courts. He denied the report that convicted people have been released and said they continue to be imprisoned. He gave the example of the son of al-Saftawi, who was one of the biggest champions of peace, whom he was forced to incarcerate, and when his mother came, 'Arafat said: I must honor the law.

Further to what the prime minister has already said, we are interested in creating places of work and not in pressuring—as we said in the meeting's opening remarks—or in punishing anybody. What we do is take steps aimed at assuring the security of Israeli residents. Therefore, we suggested setting up immediately five industrial parks in designated locations: in Janin, Tulkarm, Lahav, around Ramallah, closer to the west, closer to the sea, of course. [sentence as heard]

We also discussed practical issues. I must add that President Clinton announced that the output of these industrial parks will be considered within the framework of the agreement for a trade zone, not the free trade zone agreement existing between us and the United States. A similar pronouncement was made by the EU, which will, of course, make it easier to operate these zones. The Israeli partner will be a private partner not the government. There are Israeli firms prepared to invest. The Americans announced that any U.S. firm that has at least a 25 percent interest in these parks will get U.S. guarantees and loans on very easy terms. Basically, we are of course interested in places of work in the territories rather than the workers from the territories having to come to our side.

The atmosphere was very businesslike. Of course, all the problems cannot be resolved in one go. In my view, good, measured, orderly progress was made. We must still allow for the passing of time to serve as the main test of our ability to progress as we would like to progress in the implementation of the Cairo and Oslo agreements. We did not change our view, we remain loyal to the Declaration of Principles. All the stories about dying and stagnation are premature. Nothing is dead. There are difficulties along the way, but I believe we will overcome them as well. Our prime concern, of course, has been and remains the security issue.

[Rabin] I would like to clarify something. In today's reality Israel could resolve its labor problems, the work for which neither Israelis nor Palestinians are required. We could bring another 5,000 Thais, another 15,000 to 20,000 foreign workers, and we then would be free of dependence on Palestinian workers from the territories inside sovereign Israel. In fact, the main problem is how to create work inside the territories for the Palestinians. For me, the more we succeed in providing work in the territories for the Palestinians through the construction of five or 10 industrial parks and the less they depend on us, the more we can free ourselves of dependence on them. But if the problem is not resolved there, then there will be distress, unemployment, and even hunger, which creates problems that will also have an impact on security. Therefore the idea of industrial parks and investment possibilities in projects in the territories via the donor states is very important. We have an interest in them working in the territories and less among us since that will strengthen security and lower to a certain extent the risk of terrorist attacks—not get rid of them altogether, but curb them. We have the ability to do it unilaterally, but we must do it with a broader view.

[Qol Yisra'el's Yo'el Nir] Did you hear something from the Palestinian leaders to convince you? We know the public is very concerned about the lifting of the closure. What did they do to convince you to lift the closure, or is it just talk, and has a move been taken to restrict the Palestinian security service?

[Rabin] We have currently reached the conclusion that steps have been taken, but we still expect much more. On the other hand, there is distress, especially in Gaza, which could impede the PA's ability to do what is required of it. We are giving the PA another chance. We can always find a solution to our problem by leaving them to their distress, but the chance to make proper progress in resolving this complex Palestinian-Israeli problem would then be tougher.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Rabin, when you discuss intensive negotiations are you also referring to the implementation of parts of the interim arrangement even before the negotiations are completed? For example, the idea of Janin or Bethlehem first?

[Rabin] First, the aim is to reach an agreement and to implement it in stages. I will give you an example. We offered to allow the PA to run Janin municipally and economically with the construction of the industrial park, but we would continue to maintain full security control. In other words, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] would not evacuate, not a single Palestinian soldier would arrive. I did not observe any excitement over this idea. From my point of view, this proposal stands.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-NUR 8 Feb

NC1602125995

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 8 February edition of the Arabic-language newspaper AL-NUR that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Al-Ghazali: No Political Forum for Communist or Secular Parties
2. Editor Denies Similarity Between Shura and Democracy
3. Education Minister, Islamist Teachers, al-Azhar Committee at Odds
4. OIC: Jewish, Christian Organizations Persecuting Muslims
5. Opposition Politicians, Unionists Protest Detentions
6. Writer Warns Against Mixing Islam With Other Systems
7. Islamic Council Official Rules Out a Secular Egypt
8. Zakat, Investment Expenditure Encouraged
9. Fund To Defend Islam in North America

AL-GHAZALI: NO POLITICAL FORUM FOR COMMUNIST OR SECULAR PARTIES

A 250-word report on page 1 summarizes remarks by well-known preacher Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali on Islamic shari'ah's attitude to pluralism. Al-Ghazali says that shari'ah does not permit the establishment of communist or secular political parties in an Islamic society because they "deny revelation and religious principles."

He adds that Islam accepts intellectual, ideological, and political pluralism "on the condition that this be carried out within the context of a supreme Islamic authority."

He declares that "Islamic shari'ah does not allow atheistic or destructive ideology to exist within a Muslim society nor does it impart a legal character to such ideologies or permit them to have public forums or official institutions."

EDITOR DENIES SIMILARITY BETWEEN SHURA AND DEMOCRACY

In his regular front-page column, the newspaper's chairman of the board of directors, al-Hamzah Di'bis, discusses "The Difference Between Islamic Shura Principles and the Man-Made Concepts of Democracy."

In a 1,500-word article bearing the above quote as a headline, Di'bis blames those writers who believe that democracy is a modern form of the Islamic practice of shura [consultation] or that shura is the Islamic form of democracy. He says they could not be more wrong because "shura is the rule of God and democracy is the rule of the people."

He explains further that shura as Islam understands it means consulting pious, God-fearing people while democracy is established among people who "commit major sins and debaucheries." He blames democracy for treating "the virtuous and the debauched, the strong and the weak, the believer and the infidel equally on the grounds of equality among the members of the public."

Concerning what kind of people the ruler should consult, Di'bis says that the ruler can consult the experts on every particular issue "on condition that these experts are believers who do righteous deeds out of their sincere desire to please God." He explains that the ruler should not consult "the rabble [al- dahma'], a disbeliever, or a debauched person who drinks wine and boasts of his sins."

He declares that it is the ruler who has the right and duty to make the decisions and the adviser should only give objective, disinterested advice.

EDUCATION MINISTER, ISLAMIST TEACHERS, AL-AZHAR COMMITTEE AT ODDS

A 150-word report on page 1 says that "Education Minister Husayn Kamil Baha' al-Din has accused the experts of the National Council for Educational Research and a committee, formed by al-Azhar Grand Imam Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq, to review religious curricula in Education Ministry schools, of being extremists." This followed their examination of some religious education textbooks in elementary schools and their banning of one of these books.

The item adds that "experts on curricula at the National Council for Educational Research have submitted a comprehensive report saying that the Americans are interfering in the development of the [Egyptian] educational curricula in a suspicious way."

A related report on page 1 is a 250-word article with the headline "3,500 Teachers Transferred to Administrative Duties." The report says that the education minister has transferred these "persecuted" teachers, who come chiefly from the Governorates of Kafr al-Shaykh, al-Fayyum, al-Daqahliyah, al-Jizah, and Alexandria, to administrative posts without "interrogating them or leveling any charges against them." The report does not cite any statement by the education minister about these transfers but the last paragraph of the article reads:

"It should be noted that the Education Ministry has placed obstacles in the way of 1,200 Islamist teachers or banned them outright from contesting the Teachers Association Committee elections this month, February."

OIC: JEWISH, CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS PERSECUTING MUSLIMS

A 150-word report on page 1 by 'Ali Sabir says that the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] asserts that "Muslim minorities in more than 50 countries are being subjected to persecution and terrorism at the hands of more than 3,500 Christian proselytizing societies and Zionist committees and organizations."

The report adds that these organizations "exploit political disturbances, wars, and poor economic conditions" in the concerned countries and use methods including "terrorism, torture, financial enticement, and job opportunities" to divert the Muslims from their religion and convert them to other faiths.

The OIC report names Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Kashmir, Burma, and Sri Lanka as being in the forefront of the countries where these activities are taking place.

AL-NUR adds: "The OIC report asserts that these actions have caused the martyrdom of about a million Muslims, seriously injured, disfigured, or maimed 5 million, and turned 5 million others into refugees."

The report warns of possible Jewish and proselytizing infiltration in the Central Asian republics and the Caucasus designed "to hem in their Muslim inhabitants and loot their resources."

OPPOSITION POLITICIANS, UNIONISTS PROTEST DETENTIONS

A 500-word report by Rajab al-Damanhuri on pages 1 and 2 gives an account of a recent conference organized by the Professional Associations Coordination Committee at the Doctors Association headquarters in Cairo. The conference, described in the headline as "a Nationalist Demonstration Demanding the Release of the Islamic Current's Members," was attended by representatives of the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, the Wafd Party, and various professional associations.

The conference urged the release of the detainees and called for forming "a strong front to resist the violations of human rights and the Constitution."

The conference urged that "guarantees be drawn up for freedom of public action by the members of the political forces and the professional associations and giving them immunity from precautionary detention."

The conferees called for "abolishing the laws of ill repute and other laws that restrict liberties, therefore allowing all political circles to publish newspapers and to form political parties." They warned that repression of opinion makers will only "add fuel to the fire of sedition and entrench the roots of terrorism."

The conference said that the authorities' pursuit of opposition political figures and professional association members raises doubts about "the neutrality of the next general elections."

WRITER WARNS AGAINST MIXING ISLAM WITH OTHER SYSTEMS

A 700-word article by Anwar al-Jundi in the "Confrontation" column on page 4 under the headline "Islam Exposes the Falsity of Imported Systems" rejects the attempt by secularists to reconcile Islam, by using the concepts of nationalism, Marxism, or liberalism, as a "perfidious and corrupt attempt" because Islam cannot be a component in a composite system.

The writer declares that "since its first day, Islam has been independent and will never be used as a tool to justify the deviations of nations and cultures. The nations and cultures must amend their ways until they are reconciled with Islam's unchangeable concepts and original values".

He notes the failure of communism to realize "the promised paradise" and says that capitalist liberalism that is linked with usury has plundered nations' resources, exploited cheap labor, and sold the goods manufactured from those nations' raw materials back to them at high prices. This created "the situation described as the rich countries of the north and the poor countries of the south." He declares that this system has put the Islamic nations' resources under foreign control.

ISLAMIC COUNCIL OFFICIAL RULES OUT A SECULAR EGYPT

In a 2,500-word interview on page 4, conducted by Khalid al-Shirbini, Dr. 'Abd-al-Sabur Marzuq, secretary general of Egypt's Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs—a body which Marzuq says is closely linked to the Awqaf Ministry—examines current problems confronting the country from an Islamic perspective and offers solutions. He disagrees with those who say that the Islamists are offering illusory solutions to the country's problems and remarks:

"I admit that there are disagreements among the leading figures of the Islamic current but they are disagreements over the details, not over general basic principles. It is wrong to say that [the Islamists'] solutions are illusory because it is possible to establish a state on Islamic foundations on the condition that a middle-of-the-road and enlightened view is offered" on how to do this.

Marzuq regrets the fact that numerous conferences held by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, and indeed other Islamic conferences, are full of talk and recommendations but devoid of action.

Asked about the current campaign to frighten people of Islam by portraying it as an extremist religion, Marzuq answers that this campaign will rather create sympathy for Islam when people realize that the accusations made against it are false.

He adds: "In my opinion the problem of young men nowadays is economic. Can you imagine what a person will feel like if he still cannot find a job 10 years after graduating?"

He continues: "If this problem is solved, I challenge anyone to find even a single young man who will remains an extremist. I assert that the Egyptian individual is a believer in his heart and will always remain so. Egypt will not become secular. If Muslim nations are compelled to accept secularism or another system, that will only be a temporary phase that will pass. The Islamic nations submitted to communist rule for more than 70 years hastened back to Islam when they had the opportunity."

ZAKAT, INVESTMENT EXPENDITURE ENCOURAGED

A 2,000-word report by 'Abd-al-Rasul al-Zaraqani on page 3 discusses how Zakat, the alms money collected from rich Muslims for the benefit of the poor, should be treated not merely as charity but as money invested in industrial projects to create jobs for the poor.

Citing the Koranic verse "And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God; announce unto them a most grievous penalty," the writer says that this does not only refer to Zakat but also to other savings which must be invested in projects beneficial to the community.

He remarks: "Holding back money from circulation harms the Muslim community and causes a currency shortfall."

FUND TO DEFEND ISLAM IN NORTH AMERICA

A brief 60-word news item on page 2 with the headline "A Fund To Defend Islam in North America" reads: "The North American Islamic Council has decided to establish a fund to defend Islam and build a better future for Muslims in America. It will do this by giving them financial assistance and teaching their children legal methods of defending Islam and the way it is viewed against what is broadcast by the American media."

The report says this defense of Islam will involve recourse to court action.

OIC Calls On Afghan Factions To Support UN Peace Moves

LD1502200295 Riyadh SPA in English 1927 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, Feb 15, SPA—The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on Wednesday [15 February] called on Afghan factions to support United Nations moves to set up an interim council which would lead to a new government in Afghanistan.

The Jeddah-based OIC, grouping 51 Islamic states, also said in the statement that recent gains by the emergent Islamic student militia Taleban showed Afghans were tired of war.

The OIC "appealed to the Afghan leadership, parties and people to cooperate fully with the special mission in facilitating the convening of the Afghan Transitional Council leading to the establishment of a new interim government in Afghanistan," the statement said.

U.N. envoy Mahmoud Mestiri plans this week to convene a meeting of Afghan political figures and party representatives as a mechanism for Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani to end his self-extended term.

Taleban, which says it wants to end factional warfare and set up an Islamist state, has swept to Kabul's gates and told the government to pull its troops back to their old front lines around the city.

"Recent gains by the Taleban were indicative of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Afghan people were tired of conflict and factional strife," the OIC said.

It called for "disengagement of forces" in Afghanistan, where fighting between government and opposition factions has killed an estimated 25,000 people since the collapse of the Communist government in Kabul in 1992.

Article Examines Extremism, Democracy

95LD0023A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 11 Dec 94 pp 42-43

[Article by Fahmi Huwaydi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Is it true that political violence has become a plague threatening the entire Arab nation?

I know that the Israeli media has been trumpeting that claim for some time and I understand their motives. They want to convince everyone that Israel is not the danger threatening the region, but rather fundamentalism is the danger and Israel and the rest of the Arab countries are side by side in the same trench facing fundamental extremism which is "wrecking" peace and homes everywhere. If we understand this and discern its intentions, then what we really fail to understand is why some Arab writers are repeating the same story?

We will not focus now on clarifying this point, because we have other, more important questions. Here is the foremost among them: Is this claim true or not, and if true, what is its scope, and what are its symptoms? Moreover what are we to do to treat the plague or to prevent it?

Regretfully, statements using terms that are lacking in sufficient precision are being disseminated. It is a matter that is creating confusion, which should not be underestimated. Terms like "religious revival," "fundamentalism," "extremism," and "terror" are at times being employed by some as if they had one meaning, while they in fact have various meanings and markers. Religious revival is a healthy phenomenon, while fundamentalism has its origin in Western thinking and may be positive and negative at one and the same time. As for extremism, it consists in the exaggeration of repudiated ideas and behavior. Terror is an expression of the attempt to impose a point of view on others by way of thought intimidation or material coercion.

Our colleague, Professor 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rashid, has employed the term "politicized religious groups" in his writings on the pages of AL-MAJALLAH and has considered the phenomenon to be tantamount to a "disease" that no Arab state has escaped contracting. In spite of the fact that he has given a negative marker to the term, we do not agree with him when he classifies these groups in their entirety as negative, just as we do not consider them to always be something positive. This is because it is a question of how these groups deal with political questions. If it were to take place in keeping with democratic principles, then all is to the well and good. However, if religion is to be used as a pretext for intimidation and despotism, then no one will hesitate to reject and condemn this conduct. We have an example from Jordan. The Islamic Action Front rejected the recent treaty with Israel, thus exercising a natural and legitimate right. At the same time, its general secretary announced that the Front would proceed with its opposition to the treaty with all democratic means. This is a position that we consider to be honorable and worthy of recognition and appreciation. It should not in any way be burdened with a negative connotation.

We do not know if it would be useful or not to return to discussing the subject of religion and politics after it has become evident that separating the two is no more than a big lie. The political role that, for example, the Vatican Pope plays is concealed from no one, from Poland to the Philippines and South Africa by way of Beirut where the papal nuncio is considered to be one of the important players in the political arena. The situation is similar with Archbishop Safir who was promoted to cardinal two weeks ago. This is not to mention that the Buddhist religious groups have now assumed a prominent role on the Japanese political map through the Komeito Party, a member of the ruling coalition.

In practice, it is now no longer possible to separate any general activity from politics. Nevertheless, some of our intelligentsia still postulate the necessity of specifically separating the Islamic religion from politics. In the Islamic case where Islam is considered a renaissance that embraces all human activity and man's relationship to the heavens, the earth and the universe, the call for separation appears as if it is demanding of Muslims to delete a part of their legitimate rituals in order to satisfy a number of people. This is something that is unacceptable, religiously or logically. Incidentally, we cannot omit observing here that the call for separation between religion and politics does not come to the fore except in situations dealing with Islamic opposition. However, if interests converge and it becomes possible to exploit religion in the service of politics, then the link between the two becomes desirable and even a duty.

Furthermore, a distinction presents itself in this context and attracts one's attention. The Egyptian Constitution provides for a 50-percent participation by workers and peasants in parliamentary and local assemblies. It thus gives them the right to participate in political activities at this high percentage. Meanwhile, some find it excessive for religious scholars and canon law experts to speak on politics on the pretext that there should be a separation between faith and state.

We will quickly pass over this point in order to arrive at the fact that we are in complete agreement that what is indeed worthy of our reservations and rejection are extremism and terror, specifically the stance that is informed by ideological or material violence. However, we interject here the following essential reservation: In dealing with this problem we must be careful to avoid falling into the trap of equity between the Arab and Israeli sides. On this score, we will go so far as to assert that it is extremely important to separate the two circles completely. What is taking place in Israel is a legitimate resistance that is guaranteed to any people under military occupation by international treaties. Even if the Islamic side is leading this resistance, it draws on nationalist support as well. Nevertheless, the focus is on the Islamists alone so as to formulate the confrontation in terms of Islamic extremism resisting the legitimate authority. This is an erroneous and evil-intentioned formulation, because even if we were to limit the resistance to the Islamic side, there is still no disputing that the Israeli authority would not attain legitimacy in any way. It is, on the contrary, a usurping and coercing authority, not to mention its being, as it was, a model that embodies political and settler extremism.

Generalization Harms the Arabs

Does Islamic extremism really threaten the Arab nation?

It would be woefully wrong to consider every political opposition to be extremist. Otherwise, extremism would become a hurricane that threatens to overrun all the democracies of our contemporary world. Since democracy's bosom is capable of holding various and numerous types of opposition, the vitality of that opposition is considered to be one of the basic guarantees of democracy. At a time when the standard of ideological and political diversity is raised high, the presence of the other, the different, and the opposing becomes natural. However, we should admit that the situation from this angle is completely different in the Arab world where a mere difference of opinion is considered in many instances to be an excuse for making accusations of extremism and furthermore, a justification for taking an infinite number of precautionary and repressive measures.

The regimes that draw up the results of all their elections so as to show them winning the presidential and party elections by a 99.9 percent margin are liable to consider all who stand in opposition to them to be extremists or terrorists. This is not to mention that we classify those regimes as being in the extremist corner themselves. Thus is it not logically impossible for their positions to be classified as an expression of moderation?

We consider the mere existence of an opposition to be an indication of the vitality and health of society. It is, moreover, a testimonial in favor of the regimes that embrace it, attesting to the credibility of their allegiance to political tolerance. At the same time we strongly call for removing the extremist label from any manner of peaceful opposition, especially since in a certain aspect it is considered to represent civilized conduct that is worthy of respect.

If we were to look at the Arab world in the light of these criteria and explanations, we would discover that the circle of extremism and terror in the sense of ideological or material violence ("armed engagement") is limited and does not exceed a number of countries that can be counted on the fingers of one hand. This leads us to say that to generalize this phenomenon as being applicable to the entire Arab world is tantamount to a violation of the truth and an unjustified exaggeration.

More than that, generalization brings the greatest harm to the Arab world because it means that its soil and general environments are suffering from total corruption so that nothing but thorns and colocynth sprout there. If we were to say that violence and terror do not descend on people from the sky and that extremists and terrorists are not born that way, but are formed later under the aegis of certain political, social, and ideological environments, then the generalization of violence as being applicable to the Arab world immediately indicates that its societies have become incapable of producing mature people. They discharge nothing but ideologically and politically perverted beings!

Would anyone disagree with us when we say that this is not the real representation of Arab situation which, in spite of all its defects and evils, is better than that by far?

Additionally, the tainting of the entire Arab world as having fallen into the clutches of Islamic extremism raises an important question which is: Why has the "plague" infected the Arab world and not the Islamic world? What is the defect in the Arab world that makes it lose its immunity to violence, and what is the reason that the Islamic world has escaped violence. Neither Pakistan, nor Malaysia, nor Turkey, nor Indonesia have experienced it.

The Solution to the Problem is Democracy

We deny in the name of the Arab world that it has surrendered in its entirety to political violence. We have to admit that whenever democratic participation has become a reality, indicators of violence have receded. This is a declaration that is verified by the "comparative" Arab democracies and by Asian democracies too. It is worth mentioning here that terms like extremism and terror do not have the slightest connection with the active and developing Islamic situation in Turkey. It is mentioned only when dealing with the Kurdish problem.

This fact indicates that the so-called terror and extremism problem is primarily an expression of the aggravation of the political crisis. Whenever political openings have appeared and these openings have been translated into any form of democratic participation, the rates of violence and extremism have automatically receded. If the doors of participation were to be opened to those calling for change, and if the possibility of bringing about peaceful change were to appear before them, they would cease thinking of using violence as a means for change.

With the matter being what it is, the more important question that should be answered is not to be based on the extent of the spread of extremism and violence in the Arab world, but on the reason for the appearance of extremism in the first place, specifically in these historical circumstances and specifically in countries that have not suffered from the "disease" and did not know it before?

Many are making great efforts and spending time in condemning violence and in observing its manifestations. But we note that much less effort is being expended in the attempt to track the roots of the problem and to discover the political and social reasons that have led to it.

Ideological eccentricity and even extremism and violence are some of the characteristics of natural human societies. No mind can imagine that we would find a human society with all its components being characterized by moderation, discipline, and equality. That is why we should not be too disturbed by these phenomena as long as they are exceptions to the rule and "abnormalities" from general conduct in society. However, what really is disturbing to us are two things: on the one hand that the exception and abnormality base should expand, and on the other that society should fail to absorb the deviation that afflicts some of its components and to deal with it in a constructive way.

When the abnormality and exception base expands, the solution for us does not lie in screams of condemnation, nor in fearful calls. The solution begins with the inquiry about areas of disrepair in the political performance and in the social structure that have led to this result.

At the same time the solution does not lie in declaring war and practicing repression on the elements that have surrendered to abnormality and exception "in spite of our recognition of the necessity of making them answerable according to the law for any violation of the law." It lies in taking political and social measures to solve the socio-political problem. The big mistake that some regimes make is that they find it easier to employ the security apparatus to deal with these problems, thus aggravating the situation and triggering more waves of violence and terror.

The strength of societies is measured by the extent of their capability to absorb the energies of extremism and violence that are concealed in them, either by absorbing and disarming them and reducing their damage or by attempting to harness all or some of these energies in the national. In this context we recall the role that Israeli extremism, which is represented in the parliament, plays by building settlements, seizing Palestinian homes, and invading the holy places in al-Aqsa Mosque and the Tomb of the Patriarch.

Islamic revival is a fact worthy of appreciation and honor because at a minimum it is an expression of deliverance from cultural defeat and anticipation of the renaissance emanating from Islamic authority. Attacking the many signs of the renaissance is an amazing waste of the good will that we are going to need as we build for the future. As for the continuation of those pursuits by suppression and punishment, it will lead to reaping bitter fruit. This is something that we grieve about and do not defend. We only draw attention to it and warn about its consequences.

Unfortunately, the rule in our time has come to be characterized by pursuing the manifestations of Islamic revival with accusations at times and with repression at others. For that reason, we will not tire of saying on this occasion, and on other similar occasions, that the fundamentalists want a solution.

If the solicited solution has baffled you and you do not know what it is then I request that you read the article one more time.

Palestinian Affairs

PA Ministers View Outcome of 'Arafat-Rabin Talks

Al-Tarifi Says Israel Procrastinating

NC1702100795 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 17 Feb 95

[Telephone interview with Jamil al-Tarifi, minister of civilian authorities in the Palestinian Authority, in Ramallah, by Fayiz al-Miliji, in Cairo, on 17 February; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Miliji] President Yasir 'Arafat met with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin at Erez on 9 February. In Washington, a meeting was held on Sunday [12 February] that was attended by the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, and Israel and a representative of the Palestinian Authority [PA] with the participation of the United States. Yesterday, President 'Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin met in Erez. Does the outcome of these meetings serve the political settlement between the brother Palestinians and the Israeli occupation authorities? This is what we will try to find out from Jamil al-Tarifi, minister of civilian authorities in the PA, who is now with us on the line from Ramallah. Welcome Mr. al-Tarifi.

[Al-Tarifi] Thank you.

[Al-Miliji] We want to put the Arab listener in the picture of the political settlement process between you and the Israeli occupation authority.

[Al-Tarifi] As you mentioned in your introduction, following the incident that took place near Netanya, the political process between us and the Israeli Government came to a halt. All areas, whether under the PA's authority or in the West Bank, were sealed. A meeting was held in Cairo, followed by the Erez meeting, the Washington meeting, and another one was held yesterday in Erez. In my view, I believe that the process is moving very slowly. I believe that Israel is dragging its feet about implementing the second stage of the Declaration of Principles. Israel always raises the security concern to cover up for halting the peace process. So long as the closure continues and the Palestinians feel that there are no gains from the political settlement, I believe that the security situation cannot stabilize.

[Al-Miliji] Didn't the preparations for President 'Arafat's meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Rabin help make progress in your talks?

[Al-Tarifi] I do not think so. To talk about progress a timetable needs to be set to start negotiations for the interim period. At Erez yesterday it was mentioned that within two to three weeks negotiations would start on redeployment of the Israeli troops and elections without specifying a timetable for the negotiations or specific dates for this process. Thus, I believe that Israel is procrastinating in moving ahead with the peace process.

[Al-Miliji] So the meeting was not positive in the final analysis?

[Al-Tarifi] I do not think it was positive. For instance, approximately 15,000 workers from the West Bank and Gaza were permitted to work inside Israel. They had been prohibited from doing so previously even though the Israeli Government emphasized that none of the Palestinians workers, whether from the West Bank or Gaza, is suspected of having taken part or attempting to take part in any incident disturbing security.

[Al-Miliji] We have heard about an Israeli plan for withdrawal from the West Bank called the Bethlehem-Janin-first plan. Does this mean that you have accepted a phased Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank?

[Al-Tarifi] We in the PA do not accept this logic. What we accept is a timetable for withdrawal from all the West Bank areas. Implementation of this withdrawal can be gradual. However, there must be an agreement on a timetable for withdrawal from all the West Bank areas.

[Al-Miliji] In other words, the Israeli authorities continue to reject a timetable for withdrawal from the West Bank.

[Al-Tarifi] Israel continues to reject a timetable for the redeployment of the Israeli forces in the West Bank and for transferring the remaining powers to the PA.

[Al-Miliji] The outstanding issues between you and Israel are many. What is your comment on this subject?

[Al-Tarifi] The Palestinians, the PA, and the PLO believe in peace as a strategic option. The Israeli Government focuses on what the Palestinians have reaped from the peace process. However, it does not explain to the Israeli public what the Israelis have reaped from the peace process. We and the Israeli Government still have pending issues since the signing of the Cairo agreement. Some points of the Cairo agreement have not been implemented yet. Negotiations on the interim period are still deadlocked.

[Al-Miliji] Does the current problem revolve around the redeployment of the Israeli forces in the West Bank prior to holding elections?

[Al-Tarifi] We also need the Israeli Government's commitment to the agreements it has signed. The Israeli Government signed the Declaration of Principles. In accordance with this declaration, Israel should have redeployed the Israeli Army outside the Palestinian populated centers in July 1994. We are now in February 1995. Israel has not adhered to the Oslo accord. It has also not adhered to the Cairo agreement. In every issue on which we have agreed upon and we want to implement, the Israeli Government behaves as if it wants to negotiate a new agreement.

[Al-Miliji] In other words, the pivotal issue is the implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

[Al-Tarifi] Precisely, this is the basis.

[Al-Miliji] And Israel is procrastinating in implementing it and in withdrawing its forces from the West Bank?

[Al-Tarifi] Precisely. Israel justifies this by security pretexts and the incidents that have happened.

[Al-Miliji] Are there other minor outstanding issues?

[Al-Tarifi] Yes.

[Al-Miliji] We have heard of an American proposal for the establishment of free zone in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Is this true?

[Al-Tarifi] We and the Israeli Government have discussed the establishment of joint industrial zones on the border between the West Bank and Israel and between the Gaza Strip and Israel. We discussed this issue a month ago. We also discussed it at the recent meeting in Washington. However, when we speak about free trade, what kind of free trade is this when the PA areas are sealed off? When they speak about tourism, where is free tourism when we cannot open a tourism office on the [Allenby] bridge or at the Rafah crossing. Therefore, they speak in a completely different way.

[Al-Miliji] Yesterday's meeting between Chairman 'Arafat and Rabin; what has it achieved?

[Al-Tarifi] It has not achieved much. However, it has affirmed that the Palestinian-Israeli meetings will continue.

Quray' Details Issues Discussed

JN1602204995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Interview with Ahmad Quray', minister of trade and economy in the Palestinian Authority, by Fathi al-Barqawi on 16 February; place not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] Brother 'Abu-'Ala'[al-Barqawi], welcome.

[Quray'] Thank you.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin have held a third summit. Is there any thing new?

[Quray'] Well, you know that this meeting came after the crisis meeting held last week and which threatened the overall peace process because the climate was tense and the results were extremely negative.

As for this meeting, I will say it was not up to our expectations, but it did break the stalemate in the relations and in the negotiations. This meeting was below our expectations because it came after the Washington, Cairo, and Taba meetings. There were expectations that the situation would change.

Anyway, the two sides agreed to intensify and expedite negotiations on the interim agreement, including redeployment, elections, the transfer of authorities, and security issues. They agreed on a meeting between President 'Arafat and the Israeli foreign minister within three weeks and on a meeting between President 'Arafat and the Israeli prime minister within four weeks to evaluate the negotiations during these two periods and to see how far these negotiations have reached so that they can be given a push forward. The two sides also agreed to reach an agreement as soon as possible. The problem was that we tried (?for some time) to reach this agreement, but unfortunately, the Israelis refused that.

Anyway, the second issue the two sides discussed was that of the closure...

[Al-Barqawi, interrupting] Yes, you mean the military siege.

[Quray'] That's right, this collective punishment.

[Al-Barqawi] Yes.

[Quray'] The two sides agreed to lift this closure as of next week, in which 10,000 Palestinian workers from the Gaza Strip and 5,000 workers from the West Bank will be allowed to go to work in Israel.

The third issue dealt with issue of prisoners. The two sides decided to keep the ministerial committee, which was formed to take charge of this issue. They also agreed that a date will be fixed during next week for this committee to meet.

Moreover, the issue of settlement building was raised. The Israelis said that settlement building has been frozen and that they are freezing settlement activities.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-'Ala', there is an important point regarding redeployment. Did the two sides agree, for example, on a gradual redeployment within a specified period of time?

[Quray'] The two sides agreed to begin negotiations aimed at reaching a comprehensive agreement on redeployment throughout the West Bank. They are also expected to agree on the implementation process. It could be a gradual process. For example, redeployment will be from this area this week, from another area next week, and so on, until redeployment is achieved throughout the West Bank.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-'Ala', did the two sides discuss any other issues?

[Quray'] Yes, other issues were discussed. For example, an issue that was discussed, which I believe touches the lives of the people, has to do with keeping the Allenby Bridge, between here and Jordan, open for 12 hours; that is, from 0800 [0600 GMT] until 2000 [1800 GMT]. Moreover, the two sides agreed on the passage of 120 trucks from the Gaza Strip and 50 truck from the West Bank into and out of Israel. They also agreed to facilitate the passage of trucks to and from Jordan and to and from Egypt to transport commodities back and forth. This is the first time that this issue has been emphasized and I believe that it will have a somewhat positive outcome.

These are almost all the issues that were discussed during this meeting. Moreover, the two sides agreed that the Security Committee will hold a meeting to discuss the date when Israel will hand over the Erez checkpoint, which is used by Israel now, to the Palestinian Authority, because this is a Palestinian checkpoint. According to the Cairo accord, this checkpoint should be transferred after eight to 12 months. The Israeli checkpoint will be moved into Israel and will not remain in Erez. The two sides also agreed that the Security Committee will discuss this issue next week.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-'Ala', I thank you very much.

[Quray'] You are welcome. Thank you very much.

[Al-Barqawi] Thank you.

Quray': Talks 'Less Than Our Expectations'

TA1702092795 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 17 Feb 95

[Telephone interview with PA Economy and Trade Minister Ahmad Quray' by Ya'aqov Eylon and Ge'ula Even; place not given—live, in English with passage-by-passage translation into Hebrew; transcribed from the English]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Eylon, in Hebrew] We will now speak with Ahmad Quray', better known as Abu-'Ala', who is in charge of the economic portfolio in the Palestinian Authority [PA]. Abu-'Ala' participated in yesterday's meeting between PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin at the Erez checkpoint. We will speak with him in English and then translate his remarks into Hebrew. Good morning, Abu-'Ala'.

[Quray'] Good morning.

[Eylon] How was the meeting yesterday?

[Quray'] I believe it was okay since its ended a real crisis which started in the last week. It was less than our expectations but it's OK that it dealt with the subjects that created this crisis. For example, this meeting has dealt with the interim agreement that has been delayed now for eight months and it has been agreed between the chairman and the prime minister that both sides should start to work very hard and extensively on this agreement and speedily to reach an agreement. And they will meet, the foreign minister and the chairman, after three weeks from today, and then after four weeks there will be a meeting between the prime minister and the chairman to see where they are after these negotiations. And this says, you know, in the interim agreement they will deal with the redeployment from all West Bank, it will deal with elections, the transfer of authorities, and it will deal with security for both Palestinians and Israelis. I hope that it will work, that since there will be about a month from today until the next meeting and there will be a real achievement.

[Eylon] Abu-'Ala', why did you reject municipal autonomy in Janin as was proposed by Prime Minister Rabin?

[Quray'] And what is proposed for Janin? It is not autonomy. It is a municipality. That you can take. You can nominate the mayor of the Municipality of Janin. You can be responsible about the municipal activities. You can take the economy there. But there was nothing about the security and the Israeli Army will remain there and nothing will be changed. That is one thing which nobody can accept. The other thing is that Janin is part of the West Bank and we are speaking about redeployment in all the West Bank, not about Janin only.

[Eylon] But that can be a first step toward full autonomy later.

[Quray'] No, we can accept to have first of all agreement on the West Bank, all the West Bank and at the same time that implementation will be gradually. But there should be an agreement, there should be a good understanding between both of us that this is the way and the implementation can be made gradually.

[Even] Do you not have a policy to accept everything that Israel is offering?

[Quray'] No, no. That is not the way. If that was the case we would not be here speaking. I do not think that this will lead to an agreement. This would destroy the agreement if it would have been accepted.

[Eylon] Yasir 'Arafat, reportedly in the Israeli newspapers today, told Rabin yesterday that six terrorist acts were prevented by the Authority. Can you confirm that, Abu-'Ala'?

[Quray'] Yes. This is what I heard, that he confirmed not only that but said that there many important procedures have been taken by the Palestinian side. It is not in favor of Israelis, it is not an instruction by Israel. It is in favor of the Palestinians. But most of all, in favor of both parties at the same time.

[Eylon] Can you specify what steps were taken?

[Quray'] For example, he speaks about the establishment of the state security court and nominated the names. That he will consider any act made against the Israelis as against the agreement between both of us. That he will start to put many people who are against this agreement in jail. Many, many serious steps he has started to take, which is very important I believe to give a real chance for the agreement between Palestinians and Israel to succeed.

[Even] To end this interview, we would like to ask you about something we read this morning in the newspaper, that Palestinian ministers demand American cars like Pontiacs for example?

[Quray'] What?

[Even] You did not demand Pontiacs?

[Quray'] Why?

[Even] That is what we read in the newspaper today.

[Quray'] No, it is not true. My car is one of them.

[Eylon] What car do you have?

[Quray'] A Pontiac. This is from the Authority I have it.

[Even] So you already have a Pontiac?

[Quray', laughing] Yes.

[Even] OK; thank you very much.

'Arafat Briefs Jordanian Prime Minister on Erez Meeting

JN1702072795 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat last night telephoned Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd Bin-Shakir and briefed him on the results of the Palestinian-Israeli summit that was held at the Erez checkpoint.

President 'Arafat received a telephone call from Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa. The Egyptian minister was informed about the results of the summit. 'Arafat also briefed Mahmud Karim, representative of the Egyptian Government to the National Authority, and the U.S. consul-general in Jerusalem on the results of his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin.

Hamas Announces Acquisition of Warhead-Outfitted Missiles

TA1702114995 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A leaflet distributed in Hebron this morning and obtained by our correspondent in the territories Golan Yokhpaz claims that the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions have recently acquired new missiles. Here are the details:

[Yokhpaz] We hereby notify our heroic Palestinian people that our warriors have acquired approximately 100 missiles outfitted with warheads, which we intend to use soon. This statement is contained in a leaflet signed by 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, the military arm of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], which was distributed in Hebron this morning. In the leaflet, which was obtained by IDF Radio, 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam claims that, two days ago, they fired a missile at the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] headquarters in Hebron and, immediately afterward, opened fire with automatic weapons at the soldiers at the site, wounding several of them.

Indeed, on Wednesday, automatic fire from a Kalashnikov rifle was opened against the Hebron Brigade headquarters, but there was no report at that time of any casualties or the use of missiles. The 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions point out in their leaflet that they perpetrated the deed to mark the first anniversary of the massacre in Hebron.

In this context, it should be pointed out that terrorists did fire a training missile in the Hebron area in the past. The missile hit a Jewish house in the Bet Schneerson neighborhood, but miraculously nobody was hurt. [passage omitted]

Hamas Reacts to Authority's 'Secret Plan'

JN1502110095 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 14-20 Feb 95 p 10

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the secret plan prepared by the self-rule authority to confront Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement]—the plan which was published by AL-SABIL in its last issue—Hamas has issued the following detailed statement:

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, was surprised by the self-rule authority's secret plan to confront the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. The plan contains a comprehensive and integral program to confront the Hamas Movement on the social, political, economic, and security levels. This plan is serious because it clearly adopts the bases of the Zionist course in confronting the Islamic Resistance Movement and the rest of the Islamic and national militant forces through spreading blood, violence, isolation, and liquidation against these forces. Meanwhile, the plan of the limited self-rule authority violates all national norms and crosses the red line so as to achieve its objective represented by striking at and curbing the Hamas Movement. The plan, which smacks of Zionist spirit, is the fragile authority's clear response to the desire and pressure of the hideous Zionist occupation.

Our militant Palestinian people: As the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, denounces such a serious plan prepared by the self-rule authority, it warns against the dangers of the authority's insistence on going ahead with implementing the secret confrontation plan, which consists of the following:

1. Accusing the Hamas Movement of practicing violence against our people and targeting innocent people.

2. Dealing with Hamas in a way that will result in incorporating it into the political process, inflating its political activities, and curbing its resistance and military action against Israel.

3. Encouraging the use of mosques in political propaganda for all political forces.

4. Turning the alms committee into official government committees.

5. Defining the Hamas military apparatus, al-Qassam Battalions, and its security apparatus, and preparing an integral plan to weaken them, to liquidate them, and to deal with their staff in an appropriate way; shrouding all this with complete secrecy; and adopting a patient and quiet policy.

Our militant Palestinian people: It has become clear that the self-rule authority does not hesitate to speak frankly about its secret plan to dry up the popular, economic, social, and security resources of the Hamas Movement. Meanwhile, the plan spits out its poison, exposing its extensions, objectives, and connections which are in the service of the expansionist Zionist plan and the unjust Zionist-American campaign against the cause of our people and their cause, as well as against Islam and Muslims.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, is fully confident in the awareness, vigilance, and national conscience of our people, who will allow nobody to tamper with our national unity. Our people can differentiate between the good and bad, the militant nationalist and the one who carries out the orders of terrorist Rabin. Our people saw with their eyes the cowardly ones who fired at the defenseless worshipers in the Filastin Mosque. Our people know full well why the authority is trying to hide its responsibility for the massacre through forming a weak investigation committee so as to shelf the issue. Our people have not forgotten that the authority has so far done nothing to the killers of martyr Captain Yusri al-Himsi and to the agents who killed martyr Nasir Saluhah. It has also done nothing regarding the massacre to which the policemen were exposed at the hands of the Zionist occupation forces in Bayt Hanun.

Our people's memory is strong and they do not forget things very easily. Deception, distortion, twisting of facts, and fabrication of lies will not change a thing. Everyone in valiant Gaza, both the young and the old, knows the truth.

As it calls on the masses of our valiant people to confront this plan and deny the opportunity to anyone who may be tempted to tamper with our unity and blood, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, confirms that our people refuse to turn the mosques and houses of worship into arenas for political struggle and the spread of the seeds of sedition. It also confirms our people's adherence to the independence of the popular charity committees and institutions, which have a complete independence and which have won the confidence of our people through the long bitter years of occupation. Throughout these years, these committees and institutions proved to be credible and those who run them proved to be people of integrity at the time when others were embezzling funds and getting rich at the expense of our people's blood.

Hamas also denounces everything written in the secret plan. Hamas wonders: Does the self-rule authority not feel ashamed for playing such a disgraceful role when it employs its resources and efforts to set security, economic, social, and political plans to cooperate with the criminal Zionist entity against our people's mujahidin and their Islamic and genuine nationalistic forces? And this comes at a time when the weakness of this authority and its failure to deliver any of its promises to improve the living conditions of our people or release the thousands of prisoners, who are standing fast behind the bars of Zionist injustice, is becoming more evident everyday. This is not strange, because that authority is busy serving the occupation and submitting to its pressure. It is also busy in pursuing the mujahidin to satisfy the terrorist Rabin, who continues to humiliate the leading figures of that authority by procrastinating in implementing even the feeble provisions of the ill-omened Oslo and Cairo agreements.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, assures the masses of our valiant people and all of its supporters and cadres inside and outside Palestine that such schemes and practices will not weaken the will of the mujahidin in the al-Qassam Battalions and their adherence to the path of jihad and martyrdom. It also stresses that such programs and schemes, drafted by the Zionists' mind, will not change the fact that the feeble self-rule authority is responding more and more to the occupation authority's desires and goals at the expense of our people's goals, ambitions, and rights. This in the end will exacerbate this feeble authority's isolation and crisis.

For the scum disappears like froth cast out; while that which is for the good of mankind remains on the earth. [Koranic verse]

Algeria

Opposition Coalition Calls For Opposing Fundamentalists

NC1602161795 Paris AFP in English 1510 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algiers, Feb 16 (AFP)—An opposition coalition in Algeria called on its supporters Thursday [16 February] to organise "self-defence" against attacks by armed Islamic fundamentalists, in a statement made available to AFP.

The Movement for the Republic (MPR), in the first such move by a political group, said "all republican patriots should become organised in their districts, housing estates and workplaces to respond to the attacks which endanger their lives and those of people close to them".

The Algerian state could no longer alone ensure "the safety of citizens", the MPR said, following a spate of assassinations of civilians in the Moslem holy fasting month of Ramadan, which began on February 1.

Those slain included the director of the Algerian National Theatre, Azzedine Medjoubi, and a prominent ethnic Berber women's rights activist, Nabila Djahnine, as well as other intellectuals.

The MDR, which groups political parties and associations in the "democratic movement", stated that Algerians have become the victims of "planned genocide" and declared that people had the right to defend themselves.

The EL WATAN daily on Thursday said another woman teacher had been killed on Wednesday in the Bouzarea district of Algiers, but gave no further details. A teacher of French was shot dead at the weekend.

Last year, at least 82 teachers were assassinated, according to the press, and officials said more than 600 educational establishments were set ablaze or ransacked.

The Armed Islamic Group (GIA), most radical of the factions fighting the secular, army-backed regime, has "banned" teaching it considers out of line with the tenets of strict Moslem shari'ah law.

The armed movements have also asked their "mujahedeen" (fighters) to step up their attacks during Ramadan, a month in which a number of historic Islamic victories are commemorated.

One newspaper on Thursday, AL-KHABAR, retracted an initial report by local people that an activist of Ennahda, the Islamic Renaissance Movement, had been murdered in Chlef, southwest of the capital, on Tuesday.

The local prefect said the activist, Belkacem Fettah, a professor of Islamic law, had been kidnapped on Monday night but released safe and sound the following evening, according to AL-KHABAR.

The MPR is chaired by the secretary-general of the Rally for Culture and Democracy, Said Sadi, whose largely Berber movement has already called for the establishment of defence committees in isolated villages of the Kabylie region, home to the descendants of Algeria's original inhabitants.

Thursday's appeal was the first time Algerians have been asked to take similar action in towns, cities and workplaces.

The MPR called on politicians and other prominent figures "publicly to denounce Islamic and terrorist extremism", adding that "not to do so is to take their side and be an accomplice in organised genocide".

The statement referred to the leaders of the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) and the former sole ruling National Liberation Front (FLN), Hocine Ait Ahmed and Abdelhamid Mehri, by name.

Both those parties won seats in the first round of free general elections in December 1991, before the violence was triggered when the army called off the second round the following month once it was clear the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to sweep the board.

An estimated 30,000 people have since been killed.

The FFS and the FLN and other secular opposition parties met representatives of the now outlawed FIS for a conference in Rome last month and have issued a "national contract" calling for negotiations with the government and measures to end the violence.

But the authorities have refused such talks and the participants in the Rome meeting are in turn refusing to back presidential elections President Liamine Zeroual wants to hold by the end of the year.

Well-Known Rai Musician Assassinated Near Home

LD1602180595 Paris France-2 Teletext in French 1542 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] One of the famous Algerian musicians and producers, known by his stage name of "Rachid" was killed on Wednesday (15 February) evening, Oran (regional) television announced on Thursday. The victim, who was a member of the Rachid & Fethi duo, two very popular brothers among the youths, and leaders in the Rai music, was machine-gunned near his home.

The Movement for the Republic (MPR, hostile to the Islamists) called on all "the republican patriots" today to organize and defend themselves against the Islamists.

'Mujahidin' Entering From Arab Countries Arrested

MM1602124595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Feb 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Jamal Khashuqji: "Two Arab 'Mujahidin' Arrested in Algeria"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—Algerian sources revealed to AL-HAYAH yesterday that two young men from an eastern Arab state, believed to be of "the Arab mujahidin" previously in Afghanistan operating in the ranks of the Armed Islamic Groups, were arrested in Algeria last November. They added that the Algerian authorities notified the state to which the two belong of their arrest but did not hand them over to it. The Arab state did not seek their extradition either. This development comes at a time when a bulletin close to the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] said that "its mujahidin" had arrested an officer from a state neighboring Algeria called Ahmad Salih al-'Akrami and accused him of having fought alongside government ranks. It published his name and a photocopy of his identity card in its latest issue. [passage omitted]

Court Orders Dockers To Unload 'Dangerous' Goods

LD1602174895 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Court of Algiers today issued its ruling on the dockers' strike: It ordered the latter to guarantee and provide a minimum service by loading and unloading goods known to be dangerous or perishable, or goods linked to the needs of national defense.

The dockers'strike in the port of Algiers, which is in its sixth day, results from a conflict between the Port Authority and the trade union. [passage omitted]

Higher Education Federation Calls Off Planned Strike

LD1602192995 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The National Federation of Higher Education and Scientific Research has announced that it is calling off the strike set for Saturday, 18 February. A statement released by the trade union said that this decision came as a result of an agreement reached today between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the office of the minister delegate to the Treasury, and the National Bureau of the National Federation of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The agreement, the statement adds, provides for the implementation of a number of decisions regarding the demands made by the federation.

Commerce Ministry Introduces Import Licenses

LD1602090195 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] With the aim of confronting some import operations that constitute a danger to national production, the Ministry of Commerce has adopted a new measure that requires a licence be obtained in advance of importation.

Official Explains New Licenses

LD1602140095 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Commerce Ministry has taken a new measure regarding imports. According to Mr. Ibrahimi, director general of the Foreign Trade Department, the ministry has decided to introduce an import license in order to control some import operations that constitute a serious threat to the national production.

Thus, an import license will have to be obtained in advance for all goods imported from some Arab countries that have signed a trade and tariffs agreement with Algeria on reciprocal exemption from customs duties.

Mr. Ibrahimi said that Algeria's aim behind the introduction of this license was to protect national production. He added that Algerian businessmen had become fully aware of the real goal of such a measure and had to adjust to this necessity.

He also said that the use of this license was a method adopted throughout the world in order to protect local production.

Regarding the state's responsibility for organizing trade, Mr. Ibrahimi said that the wager of reforms was based on transforming the administrative structure into a structure for market mechanisms. Therefore, he added, the state's intervention cannot be ruled out if the need to correct any flaw in the market arises.

According to Mr. Ibrahimi, this intervention will not be administrative but will imply fixing the prices of tax-free goods destined for export, as is the case for the tomato center [as heard], in order to ensure that local needs are largely met.

Asked whether the markets in charge of importing some essential goods, such as wheat, barley, sugar, coffee, and pharmaceutical products, had attracted the attention of the private sector, Mr. Ibrahimi said that the public sector still had the monopoly over the import of these goods due to the absence of professionals in the private sector specialized in such goods.

However, he concluded by saying that the National Center for the Monitoring of External Markets had received 170 applications from businessmen who were interested in importing these goods.

Gas Agreements Signed With Portugal

LD1502234895 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Amar Makhloufi, the minister of industry and energy, today ended his official visit to Lisbon where he held a series of talks with his Portuguese counterpart on the progress achieved in the building of the Maghreban-European gas pipeline which is proceeding normally and which is due to be completed in 1996.

Makhloufi also visited the section reserved for Portugal and which consists of three stages [sentence as heard]. In the first stage, Algeria will supply Portugal with a quantity of gas estimated at 0.9 billion cubic meters. This quantity of natural gas will increase over 20 years to two and 2.5 billion cubic meters.

At a news conference he gave before leaving Lisbon, Makhloufi said that economic cooperation between Algeria and Portugal could be centered only on the building of the gas pipeline since, he added, there are other activities in which Portuguese companies and economic operators could get involved [sentence as heard].

Protocol Accord on Cooperation Signed With Mali

LD1702031995 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The sixth round of meetings of the Algerian-Malian bilateral technial committee ended on 16 February after two days of work in the province of Adrar. The meetings ended with the signing of a protocol agreement on bolstering cooperation between the two countries. (Abdelasmi Abdelhai) with more details.

[Abdelhai] The minutes were signed by Nouredine Kasdalli, minister delegate for local communities and administrative reforms, for Algeria, and Colonel Sada Samake, minister of territorial administration and security, for Mali. The agreement shapes the prospects of bilateral cooperation and the consolidation of security and stability in the two countries. It also stipulates the establishment of border posts between the countries to control illegal immigration and combat smuggling.

The Algerian side reaffirmed Algeria's firm stance on supporting all the endeavors concerning Malian national accord, and supporting bilateral cooperation in many spheres, such as local development in the border region. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Mubarak Reacts to Israeli Leaders' Remarks

NC1602122495 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1103 GMT 16 Feb 95

[News conference by President Husni Mubarak with unidentified correspondents; place and date not given; monitored in progress]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Is there any follow-up on the recent quadripartite summit held in Cairo and on its resolutions? Can we say that this summit has reactivated the peace process?

[Mubarak] The quadripartite summit's primary aim was to save the peace process, that is, the Palestinian problem, which we regard as the core of the issue. Without solving the Palestinian problem, other problems will be difficult to solve. I believe the peace process was reactivated to a certain extent but the path is still rough, complex, and long.

[Correspondent] Israeli Prime Minister Rabin described the Alexandria tripartite summit as an attempt to (?normalize) Arab-Islamic ties with Israel.

[Mubarak] The Alexandria tripartite summit had nothing whatsoever to do with normalization. We are talking about the peace process. I do not know why they make these very awkward statements nowadays contradicting the true situation.

Nothing was discussed at the Alexandria summit concerning normalization, halting the normalization, continuing the normalization, or anything of the kind. We talked about advancing the peace process. I think topic number one on the agenda was the peace process, not normalization. I do not know if this is some kind of campaign by them and one still [word indistinct].

[Correspondent] Mr. President, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin stated that Egypt sought to block the resumption of relations between Israel and Tanzania through the Egyptian ambassador in Tanzania on direct instructions from Your Excellency. What is your comment?

[Mubarak] That is not all he said [words indistinct] in the Knesset. He said the Egyptian Foreign Ministry follows an anti-Israel line. Every time we disagree on something...[pauses] The Egyptian Foreign Ministry does not act alone and is not independent of the State of Egypt. It implements the Egyptian Government's policy.

If every time we differ on something, does this mean an anti- Israeli policy? What is the logic in that? If we follow this line, things will be complicated.

I say the Egyptian Foreign Ministry had a disagreement with the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Emerging from a meeting, the Israeli foreign minister said that the Egyptian foreign minister adopts an anti-Israeli line. What hostile line? Yes, we disagree with him on many issues and we have mutual differences with various countries. But does this mean we are hostile? Why does Israel every time we disagree over an issue say this is a line hostile to Israel?

I cannot understand what is this all about. The second thing is that he said a very strange thing in the Knesset that amazed me. However, he had made a similar statement before. He said once—I heard it in reports they made and not by him directly—that Egypt incited Djibouti and the Comoros Islands—which was really surprising to me because basically we do not play this kind of game at all—so that they may not restore or establish diplomatic relations with Israel. This never happens. Had he asked me I would have told him. Our foreign minister mentioned this to the Israeli foreign minister when he was here in Cairo about two weeks ago. Now when I hear that he told the Knesset that Egypt had sent a message to Tanzania so that it would not establish diplomatic relations [with Israel]. This is something that elicits astonishment. Is this the signal for starting another media offensive against Egypt? I cannot imagine how the Israeli prime minister could say such things. If he is giving me information, let him verify the source of his information. Why doesn't he ask us? Don't we have relations with him? Let him ask us. If he did, we would tell him that we do not play such games at all. So what is the meaning of all this? He wants to prove any way he can that Egypt is taking a hostile stand toward Israel. Well. If we disagree, does that mean that we are hostile? I am sorry to tell him: What you said in the Knesset about Tanzania is not true and has nothing to do with the truth. If it indeed happened, we would have admitted it. We do not lie. I wish he were more careful instead of complicating relations between us. And when relations get complicated, he says a hostile stand is being taken against Israel. How strange. Say I disagree with any fraternal country... does that mean this indicates a hostile stand? Say I disagree with the United States, Russia, or England... does that mean a hostile stand? Do we have to agree with everything they want or we become hostile? No. There will be areas [preceding word in English] on which we will disagree, not only with Israel, but with any other country.

[Correspondent] Have Egypt and Israel reached a formula regarding the signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]? It has previously been announced that talks are under way toward that end.

[Mubarak] That is what I expected, that we sit down to discuss a formula to resolve the matter. But they started the offensive early. They talk about Tanzania and say that Egypt is taking a hostile stand against Israel, which proves that they do not want to join us in this process. This is an issue that certainly affects Egypt's national security.

[Correspondent] The Cabinet yesterday approved Egypt's membership in the GATT. Will Egypt's membership in this agreement lead to an increase in prices and will it affect the low-income people?

[Mubarak] No, it will not affect the low-income people. Generally speaking, if we do not join the GATT we will lose much. If we join it, perhaps the negative aspects will be much less. Everything has its positive and negative aspects. When the positive aspects are much more than the negative, we have to join it; otherwise, we will be left behind internationally. This is a world trade agreement that we cannot isolate ourselves or stay away from. Thank you.

MENA Cites Mubarak on NPT, Israeli Ties

NC1602170895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1400 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Feb (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has declared that the tripartite summit in Alexandria had nothing to do with the normalization process with Israel, that it discussed the peace process, and that it said nothing about halting the normalization process.

The president made these statements to reporters following the meetings he held today.

He replied to a question by a MENA correspondent on the quadripartite summit that was held in Cairo recently, the resolutions it adopted, whether there is follow-up work on what was agreed during that summit, and whether it can be said that the summit reactivated the peace process. He replied that the quadripartite summit was held to save the peace process, particularly the Palestinian issue, which we consider the core of the Middle East problem. Unless the Palestinian problem is solved, it will be difficult to solve other problems, the president said, adding: I believe that the Palestinian problem was stirred up to some extent. But the path of peace is still rough, complex, and long.

Mubarak answered a question on remarks Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin made to the Knesset, to the effect that Egypt had sought to block the resumption of relations between Israel and Tanzania and that the Egyptian ambassador to Tanzania had conveyed an Egyptian request to that effect to the Tanzanian Government on the president's instructions. The president replied that Rabin did not stop at that, but said that the Egyptian Foreign Ministry was pursuing an anti-Israeli line. The president asked: Does every disagreement we have with Israel mean that we are pursuing a hostile line?

He pointed out that the Egyptian Foreign Ministry is not an independent state within Egypt and that it carries out the policies of the Egyptian Government. If we are going to apply this logic in our relations, things will get complicated, he remarked, noting that the Israeli foreign minister had said that the Egyptian foreign minister was pursuing a line that is hostile to Israel.

Where is that hostile line they are talking about, he asked. He went on: We disagree with other states on many issues just as they disagree with us. Does this mean that we are assuming hostile attitudes toward each other? He asked: Why does Israel in particular say that we are pursuing a hostile line whenever we disagree with each other? He added: I fail to understand their logic.

Mubarak added that Rabin's remarks to the Knesset also touched on Tanzania and noted that Israel had earlier made similar allegations when it said that Egypt had incited Djibouti and the Comoros Islands not to restore relations with Israel. I was surprised to hear that, because we absolutely do not play this game, Mubarak said. He added: Rabin later said that we had incited Tanzania not to establish diplomatic ties with Israel. Had Rabin asked me I would have told him the truth about that matter. Our foreign minister discussed the matter with the Israeli foreign minister.

He remarked that what Rabin told the Knesset is surprising, and he asked: Is this a sign of another attack against Egypt? I cannot see how the Israeli prime minister could say such things to the Knesset. If he is basing his remarks on some information, let him tell us the source of his information. Besides, why does he not ask us? Do we not have relations? Had he asked us we would have told him that we absolutely do not play these games, the president said.

President Mubarak wondered about the implications of the Israeli statements. He said that Rabin wants to give the impression by any means possible that Egypt is pursing a course that is hostile to Israel. Does every time we disagree with them mean that we are hostile to them, he asked; adding: I am sorry about that. I say to Rabin that what he told the Knesset is untrue and has nothing to do with the truth. If it had happened we would have told him so, because we do not lie. I wish Rabin had been more careful instead of complicating our relations and then saying that we are pursuing an anti-Israeli line, the president said.

The president asked: Does every disagreement with America, Russia, or Britain mean that I am taking a hostile attitude toward them? Do they in Israel want us to consent to everything they demand or else be considered hostile? There are areas on which we might disagree with any state, not just Israel. This is natural, he said.

Mubarak answered a question on Rabin's recent remarks that Egypt is trying to make Arab states feel unsafe with regard to Israel and asking how bad the bilateral problems with Israel have gotten, particularly in light of Egypt's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] unless Israel does. He replied: I tell you frankly that all we want is for Israel to sign this treaty, because it is a neighboring state and because anything that happens can threaten our country's national security. I am not speaking here on behalf of the Arab states; I am speaking for Egypt.

He added: We in Egypt do not feel safe in the presence of that nuclear arsenal in Israel and in the absence of international inspections.

Asked whether this matter will affect relations between Egypt and the United States, the president said: It might affect relations to a limited degree. But we explained to the Americans why we refuse to sign the treaty. I believe that they understand our position well. We discussed this issue with a number of U.S. officials before and they fully understand our position on it.

Asked whether Egypt and Israel have reached a formula regarding signing the NPT now that they have discussed the matter, the president said: That is what I expected, that we would sit down to discuss a formula to resolve the issue. But they started their offensive early with talk about Tanzania and Egypt's anti-Israeli line. This shows that they do not want to join us in pursuing a solution to the problem. This issue certainly affects Egypt's national security, Mubarak added.

Answering a question on the cabinet's approval of Egypt's membership in GATT and how this will affect low-income groups, he replied that this will not affect people with limited incomes. Generally speaking, if we do not join GATT, we will lose a lot, he said, adding: But if we join, the negative impact will be much less. Everything has its positive and negative sides. Since the positive aspects far exceed the negative, we have to join it; otherwise, we will be left behind internationally.

The president added: This agreement concerns world trade; we cannot stay isolated or ignore it.

The president made these remarks following meetings with Dr. Venice Kamil Jawdah, minister of state for scientific research, and Electricity and Energy Minister Engineer Mahir Abazah.

Musa Discusses U.S. Visit, Talks in Germany

NC1602192995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1810 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Bonn, 16 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has described his visit to the United States as successful and important because it handled issues of current concern, notably the Middle East peace operation.

In a statement to MENA's Bonn correspondent, Musa said that Egyptian-U.S. relations are very good. He pointed out that there will be an exchange of visits between the two countries soon, including a visit to Cairo next month by U.S. Vice President Al Gore and a later visit to the United States by President Mubarak.

The foreign minister noted that his visit to Washington highlighted the important role played by both the United States and Egypt in salvaging the Middle East peace process. He added that during the visit he discussed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and U.S. congressmen. He referred to Egypt's known stance on the issue, namely that all the region's countries without exception should sign the Treaty.

Regarding his talks in Germany, Musa told the MENA correspondent that he will meet German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the German minister for economic cooperation, the chairman of the Bundestag's Foreign Relations Committee, and Bundestag President Rita Sussmuth.

He noted that his talks with German officials will deal with several issues, notably bilateral ties, peace developments in the Middle East, and the ways in which Germany can support the Palestinians. He said that other issues to be discussed will revolve around relations between the EU and Mediterranean countries, the proposed partnership agreement with the EU, and conditions in Europe.

Concerning Egypt's efforts to lift the economic sanctions on Iraq and Libya, 'Amr Musa remarked that he discussed these two issues with the Americans and intends to discuss them with German officials.

The foreign minister stressed the German role, and the European role in general, in helping to establish peace in the Middle East in view of the special relationship between Europe and the Middle East, their geographical proximity, shared interests, and the relations among officials of every level in the countries of both regions. He remarked that the Europeans have set the tone for a neutral attitude with regard to helping Middle Eastern parties.

Commenting on the exchange of visits between Egypt and Germany, Musa said that these visits are made on a regular basis by the leaders, ministers, and experts.

He said that no specific decisions have been made regarding President Mubarak's next visit to Germany and declared that Egypt always welcomes visiting European officials.

Papers View Mubarak's Remarks, Stance on Treaty

NC1702095395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0700 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Feb (MENA)—Today's Cairo papers, on their front pages and in their headlines, highlight President Mubarak's remarks to journalists yesterday in which he warned Israel against creating a crisis with Egypt. The president pointed out that Egypt has not adopted a hostile stance toward Israel and that Israel must not accuse Egypt of following that line whenever a dispute arises between the two countries. The papers highlight President Mubarak's view emphasizing that the Alexandria summit was not intended to obstruct or halt normalization with Israel, but to save the peace process. The papers focus on President Mubarak's remark that we do not feel safe with the presence of an Israeli nuclear arsenal uninspected by the world community.

In their editorials today, AL-AHRAM and AL-JUMHURIYAH stress that Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty casts doubt on Israel's sincerity toward peace and gives extremists an excuse to continue acts of violence. It also takes the region back to an atmosphere of threats to use force and the beating of drums of war. AL-AHRAM calls on the world community to force Israel to sign the Treaty and emphasize that eliminating Israel's nuclear weapons is a precondition for genuine peace in the region. The paper notes that the Israeli Government's insistence on unilateral possession of nuclear weapons in the region, no matter how regional and world conditions change, serves only one purpose, that is, providing Israel with all the military means to achieve its expansionist and aggressive plans in the region.

The paper adds that Israel's insistence on clinging tight to its nuclear weapons represents a direct threat to the security, stability, and existence of the Arabs, undermines the chances of establishing a just and durable peace, and opens the door wide for a new nuclear arms race in the region. AL-AHRAM adds that Israel would be mistaken to imagine that the Arabs could agree forever to remain under the Israeli nuclear threat and extortion without thinking of possessing equal and deterrent means.

AL-JUMHURIYAH notes that support for Egypt's position of refusing to sign the Treaty unless the Israeli Government signs it too is widening. This is because of the strong logic behind this position and the inadmissibility of exempting any state from complying with the wish of the world community to get rid of the nuclear arsenal, the paper adds. The paper notes that the Arab position on the Treaty and the need to free the area of weapons of mass destruction conform with international legality and the position of the world community, which renounces violence as a step toward opening the door to equal cooperation and socioeconomic development, which the Middle Eastern states and people need most. AL-JUMHURIYAH says it hopes the Israeli Government will learn the lesson and reach out for a genuine peace and better future.

Mubarak Speaks With Libya's al-Qadhdhafi

NC1602212495 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak telephoned brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, this evening. They exchanged greetings on the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan. They also exchanged views on several issues of mutual concern.

Police Sentry Shot Dead in Mallawi

NC1602184195 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1740 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Feb (MENA)—An auxiliary police sentry from the Mallawi Auxiliary Sentries unit was shot and killed by unknown assailants today. The culprits escaped.

An Interior Ministry security source announced that the incident occurred when unknown individuals shot auxiliary police sentry Nabil Salawani while he was on his way to work in the village of Naway, Mallawi District. The source said the sentry was martyred.

Senior officials of the Al-Minya Governorate Security Directorate, various personnel from other detective agencies, and forensic experts left for the scene to look for clues.

The Prosecutor's Office has been notified and the police are trying to arrest the culprits.

Embassy Official: Country's Only Threat 'Terrorism'

MS1302093895 London THE INDEPENDENT in English 13 Feb 95 p 14

[Letter by Ahmad al-Ibrashi, press counsellor at Egyptian Embassy in London: "Terrorism is the Only Threat to Egypt"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sir: Robert Fisk's article "Terror stalks Egypt's forgotten towns" (8 February) describes the actions by a small group of civilian outlaws who have reacted against the police as an "Islamic revolution in Mallawi". This can hardly be described as a "revolution". The last paragraph of Mr Fisk's article refers to an armoured vehicle passing with its siren, "wailing above the sound of a children's school". If the sound of a children's school can be heard, then how can the village of Mallawi be described as suffering a "revolution"?

Mr Fisk's article referred to Mallawi as a destitute town of dust, car workshops and cane-trading which the government has ignored. In fact, the Egyptian government has very ambitious plans to rebuild Egypt which is evident by the building of thousands of schools, hospitals, industrial complexes and homes for its people.

It has also created 13 new towns in desert areas and a programme for agricultural development, all of which has increased employment opportunities for the Egyptian people. Income from tourism alone has reached $3bn in one year. The only threat to economic development in Egypt is the terrorism.

The opinion of the militants is that democracy does not exist in Egypt. The statement of Fathallah Khafaji, the local representative of the Egyptian Organisation of Human Rights, shows that freedom of speech does exist, and he himself has referred to the crimes that have been committed against the people of Mallawi who have spoken out against the terrorists.

It is the terrorists themselves who are against democracy which was demonstrated by their recent assassination attempt on the Nobel Prize winner, Najib Mahfuz.

Paper Criticizes NATO Remarks on Islamic Fundamentalism

NC1602095695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0700 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Feb (MENA)—AL-AHRAM newspaper criticizes the NATO secretary general's remarks in which he described Islamic fundamentalism as the real enemy of the West.

In its editorial today, the paper emphasizes that this statement is not just a slip of the tongue because it has been said before and repeated many times by more than one official of that organization or by its member states. In addition, very serious studies and research works have been published on the issue in the past.

The paper warns that Islamic fundamentalism, as meant by the NATO secretary general, is not the terrorist groups now forming in many Islamic and Arab countries. Rather, it is everything that relates to Islamic thought and heritage: the attempt to revive this nation and help it wake up from its slumber; the attempts to nurse the Islamic nation's wounds; and the attempt to restore amity and political and economic coordination to its peoples.

The evidence, the paper says, is that the terrorism, which falsely wears the cloak of Islam, is evolving and growing in the West and being exported to Arab and Islamic countries so that these countries will always be subject to instability. It adds that some Western politicians are still imagining that terrorism under the cloak of Islam may accomplish their dreams.

The paper refers to Egypt's repeated warnings against the consequence of encouraging such terrorists and opening the door to them, affirming that the consequences will be grave for the Western nations themselves.

Technical Fund Donates $1 Million in Aid to Sarajevo

NC1602123795 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 11 Feb 95 p 1

[Report by Mahmud 'Abd-al-Karim]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with the CIS has contributed one million dollars in technical aid for the reconstruction of Sarajevo, Fund Secretary General Ambassador Mayy Abu-al-Dhahab has stated. Ambassador Abu-al-Dhahab added that the aid provides for the dispatch of high-level Egyptian experts to help carry out a number of projects in Sarajevo. As part of the aid program, some personnel from Sarajevo will attend extensive training courses in Egypt in such fields as banking and diplomatic work, food industry, medicine, and media.

The fund works independently as well as in conjunction with the World Bank and UN specialized organizations to provide financial and technical aid to people in the CIS as well as in the newly independent Islamic states.

Al-Azhar Shaykh: Militants Must Be Killed or Maimed

NC1702120195 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 8 Feb 95 p 8

[Report by Buthayna Zakariya and Hisham al-'Ajami]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a daring and unprecedented speech at the start of an enlightenment campaign during the month of Ramadan, al-Azhar Shaykh Jad-al-Haq 'Ali Jad-al-Haq told the youths and masses of Bani Suwayf that the terrorists are not an Islamic group, because Islam is not composed of groups, but is one community. From now on these terrorists should be called criminals, oppressors, and khawarij [dissident outlawed sect in Islam]. These criminals deserve heaven's punishment as laid down in the Koran, namely, that whoever sows corruption on earth should be killed, exiled from Egypt, crucified, or at least have their hands and feet chopped off. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Jad-al-Haq said: I do not refer to those who commit incidents in our society as extremists, because the Koran has called them khawarij. I call those who carry out terrorism in our country or in any other Islamic country khawarij. [passage omitted]

We should not surrender to them and should not leave the police to fight them alone. [passage omitted]

Let us call a spade a spade and let us call the terrorists khawarij, oppressors, aggressors against the nation, and criminals. [passage omitted]

Denounces Advocates of 'Caliphate' System

NC1702112495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0850 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Al-Mansurah, 17 Feb (MENA)—Al-Azhar Shaykh Jad-al-Haq 'Ali Jad-al-Haq has urged Muslims to cooperate and to cement bonds among members of society. He also urged families to bring up their children with piety, good work, and respect for rights and duties and to benefit from the lessons of the Battle of Badr [between Muslims and Meccans on 17 March 623 AD] so that we can all earn God's victory.

In a speech at a ceremony held by the Awqaf Ministry in a Nile Delta village last night on the anniversary of the Battle of Badr, Shaykh Jad-al-Haq said there is no text in the holy Koran that calls for a caliphate as a system of government. He urged those who call for a caliphate to work to solve the differences among the Muslims and to confront the aggression on Muslim minorities.

Shaykh Jad-al-Haq strongly denounced those who call themselves the emirs of extremist groups, who resort to murder and sabotage, who imitate criminal gangs, and who threaten state security. He noted that the election or referendum system for electing a ruler is in line with Islam's adoption of the shura [consultative] system. He said that Islamic shari'ah has not set out a specific system for electing a ruler but has left it to changing conditions and circumstances. He said that Egypt is an Islamic country and that it is not right to level accusations of blasphemy at it when it is implementing God's orders and is opening mosques and when the Muslims in Egypt are performing all their religious rites.

Awqaf Minister Dr. Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub, who attended the ceremony, said that Egypt will remain a haven for peace and security and that the Islamic world depends on the centrist and moderate Islamic thought as adopted by Egypt and its scholars and heroes. He called on the youth to fortify themselves with faith and the correct understanding of religion. He also urged them to confront those who are trampling on the country's stability through terrorism and bloodshed. [passage omitted]

Libya

Report of Offer of Aid to Somalia's Aidid Denied

LD1602164795 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1556 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris, 16 Feb (JANA)—The Paris weekly magazine L'EXPRESS today published a report saying that Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi has decided to offer military support to Muhammad Farah Aidid, leader of the Somali National Alliance.

The L'EXPRESS report is a cause for surprise; it is a total, baseless fabrication. We have to stress here that this fabrication is part of a plot aimed at distorting the image of the Great Jamahiriyah, and undermining its stances toward and its relations with other nations.

The Great Jamahiriyah has and is making efforts to establish peace in Somalia, to stop the bloodshed, and to bring about national reconciliation there. It has taken practical steps toward achieving this, including sending a Libyan delegation of ulema, mosque imams, and teachers of the Arab language. The delegation met all the Somali factions to consolidate national unity, and to establish stability and peace so that the Somali people can devote their time to building their country.

While the Great Jamahiriyah is playing its role for peace in Somalia, it has no intention of offering any military support to any of the parties engaged in the conflict.

Algeria's Dembri Delivers Message to al-Qadhdhafi

LD1502214795 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The brother leader of the revolution has received a message from his brother president Liamine Zeroual, head of state of fraternal Algeria. The message, which was conveyed by brother Mohamad Salah Dembri, the [Algerian] foreign minister, included the greetings of President Zeroual to the brother leader as well as his appreciations for the stance taken by the latter and the Libyan Arab Libyan in support of his fraternal Algerian people. The message also spoke of Algeria's eagerness to bolster fraternal relations with the Great Jamahiriyah in all spheres.

Comments on Visit, Departs

LD1602142995 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brother Mohamad Salah Dembri, Algerian minister of foreign affairs, left Tripoli today after a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah. [passage omitted]

Brother Dembri made a statement to the Libyan news agency JANA before departure, in which he expressed happiness for his visit to the Great Jamahiriyah as a special envoy of President Liamine Zeroual to his brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi.

In the statement, Dembri said: During this visit I have conveyed the greetings of President Zeroual to his brother Col. al-Qadhdhafi and reiterated the solidarity of the Algerian people with its brotherly Libyan people. My meeting with the brother leader al- Qadhdhafi also gave me the opportunity to benefit from his views on all of the Arab nation's crucial issues. The meeting was a chance to tackle a number of various issues of common interest for the two brotherly countries.

Concluding his statement, the Algerian minister of foreign affairs affirmed the deep fraternal relations between the Great Jamahiriyah and Algeria, making clear that these relations had witnessed a qualitative improvement through the mutual visits, particularly the visit paid by President Zeroual to the Great Jamahiriyah and his meeting with his brother Col. al-Qadhdhafi.

Commentary Regrets AMU Acceptance of UN Sanctions

LD1602224195 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The announcement of the establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union [AMU] was the crowning of a struggle to achieve unity, which constitutes the main dimension and policy in the great Fatih revolution's march. [passage omitted]

The march of the AMU is facing difficulties, the most important of which is that most of the agreements, with the exception of five, have not come into force because the endorsement procedures have not been completed and endorsement documents have not been lodged. This is in addition to other difficulties, such as differences in industrial specifications and standards, lack of funds for financing projects and foreign trade, existence of numerous undeclared customs restrictions; poor road networks, and poor land, sea and air transport; and a lack of flow of economic information.

The Libyan Arab masses depended on the union to stand by them and support them in the injustice inflicted on them as a result of the colonialist Western states and America ganging up on them by accusing two Libyan citizens of involvement in the so-called Lockerbie issue. These colonialist states used the so-called Security Council to serve their hostile objectives and schemes, aimed at striking at the Libyan Arab people and at their capabilities and revolutionary options. These states exercised a cheap hostile policy by using the so-called Security Council to pass a resolution imposing unjust sanctions on the Great Jamahiriyah.

The Libyan Arab people depended on the AMU member states in accordance with the provisions of the accord that established the AMU. Article 15 states: The member states undertake to refrain from joining any pact, military or political bloc aimed against the political independence or the territorial integrity of the other states;, and article 14 says: Any aggression against a member state will be considered as aggression against the other member states.

With great regret, and contrary to the spirit and provisions of the accord, the member states adhered to the implementation of the unjust measures against the Libyan Arab people. We expected a rejection of these measures in view of Libya being a part of the AMU.

The union's documents have been lodged with the United Nations, which enables the member states not to adhere to the unjust measures, and the Great Jamahiriyah has given the member states every power, and invested in them the authority to reach a solution via diplomatic contacts and direct dialogue to settle the dispute with the Western states.

While we hold in esteem the efforts made by some leaders of the AMU—which America and the West ignored despite the strong ties between America and these countries—this stance, which the Libyan Arab people did not expect, made a bad impact at a time when they were hoping that the union would come to their aid.

Sudan

Friendship Council Official Accuses U.S. of 'Malice'

EA1602211595 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1740 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 16 Feb (SUNA)—Dr. Mustafa 'Uthman Isma'il, secretary general of the International Popular Friendship Council, has stressed that the U.S. administration's decision to include Sudan's UN mission in New York in the terrorism list proved malice, and was inspired [words indistinct] to incriminate Sudan. He said the decision violated international conventions and laws. In a briefing today to members of the [words indistinct] Khartoum state (?conference), he said the U.S. administration had not (?identified) any of the individuals belonging to the mission, but had included all its members in the terrorism list. He stressed that the U.S. allegations were part of an ongoing scenario in the world and a way of depicting Islam as (?an adversary) of western civilization.

Minister Taha Briefs Envoys on Foreign Policy

EA1602211095 Khartoum SUNA in English 1723 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, 16 February (SUNA)—The foreign minister, Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha, has reiterated Sudan's content with the charters of the UN, Arab League, Organization of African Unity and Organization of Islamic Conference that call for the respect of the national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs and resolution of conflicts by peaceful means.

During his meeting on Thursday [16 February] with heads of the African, European and Asian diplomatic corps and the U.S. ambassador, Taha called for respect of democracy and social justice in the said organizations and agencies, and the reconsideration of the representation in these organizations in a way that provides a better position for the Third World countries to participate in the decisionmaking process.

The minister has acquainted the heads of the diplomatic corps with principles which shape Sudan's foreign policy for the coming period, which are represented in the Islamic orientation, self-sufficiency, realization of balanced socio-economic development and solution of the South problem peacefully.

He re-emphasized the government's determination to achieve a peaceful solution to the southern Sudan problem. Calling upon the international community to support the Sudan government's programmes in the field of development, peaceful solution of the South problem and rehabilitation of the war-affected areas [incomplete sentence as received]

In the African context the Sudan will continue to promote relations both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, he said, adding that with an unshakeable sense of obligation, Sudan will continue to demonstrate much interest in the subregional forums, i.e. COMESA (Common Market of East and Southern Africa) and IGADD [Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development].

He also tackled the Middle East question, explaining that the Sudan believes in the legitimate rights of the Arab nations in the liberation of all the Arab lands according to the UN Resolution No. 242 and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Sudan will also continue to enhance and strengthen relations with the Asian countries through technical and economic relations, Taha said.

He emphasized Sudan's belief in the importance of South-(?North) cooperation and the [word indistinct] NAM (Non-Aligned Movement).

According to Taha, the Sudan Government will continue dialogue with the United States and the EC, aiming toward normalization and achievement of relations based on mutual understanding. The Sudan will also continue to promote North-South cooperation and North-South dialogue, the foreign minister added.

Minister To Attend Geneva Human Rights Conference

EA1602212095 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abd-al-Aziz Shiddu, the minister of justice and attorney general, will leave for Geneva on 18 February, to participate in the 51st session of the human rights commission.

In a statement to the radio's reporter, his excellency said Sudan's delegation would respond to the allegations and fabrications set out in UN representative Gaspar Biro's report, which have already been lodged with the commission. The report called for the appointment of international observers to monitor human rights in Sudan and the revocation of the Islamic laws, alleging that the laws include provisions incompatible with the UN Charter.

On the false allegations made by the United States about Sudan's mission to the UN, the minister of justice said Sudan was totally innocent in this respect, and that the United States was always trying to link Sudan with terrorism without providing any evidence to backup its allegations.

Saudi Arabia To Mediate Bahrain-Qatar Land Dispute

NC1602203195 Paris AFP in English 1708 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Feb 16 (AFP)—Bahrain on Thursday [16 February] agreed to seek Saudi mediation to resolve its land dispute with Qatar after Doha offered to withdraw its request for a ruling from the International Court of Justice.

"I welcome the invitation for a resumption of the good offices" of Saudi King Fahd, said Bahrain's Crown Prince Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah in response to a proposal from his Qatari counterpart Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani. "This will come through a meeting to be convened as soon as possible between the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain," the Bahraini crown prince said, quoted by the official news agency GNA [GULF NEWS AGENCY].

"A framework to implement resumption of the talks will be laid down through such a meeting in order that a comprehensive brotherly solution may be reached," he said.

Qatar's crown prince said Wednesday that his country could withdraw its request for the International Court of Justice in The Hague to rule on the territorial dispute if a settlement could be reached through Saudi mediation.

"Qatar hopes that the efforts of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia will continue and is ready to withdraw its request to the International Court of Justice if an acceptable settlement is reached," he said.

Earlier on Wednesday, the court said it was competent to rule on the dispute—a judgement described by Qatari representative Najib al-Nawimi as "a victory and a first step towards a peaceful settlement of the case."

Shaykh Hamad, quoted by the official Qatari news agency QNA, thanked King Fahd for his mediation efforts, which he said led to the signing of the 1990 Qatari-Bahraini accord.

Saudi mediation efforts appeared to have dried up in the past few years.

Qatar claims the Hawar islands, and wants demarcation of underwater archipelago boundaries, al-Zubarah, pearl-diving areas and fishing grounds and all matters concerning maritime boundaries.

Bahrain has argued that Qatar had no right to present a unilateral request to the World Court because of accords the two countries signed in 1987 and 1990.

Their dispute dates back to 1939 when Britain granted Bahrain ownership of small islands believed to have large oil and gas deposits.

Qatar Hails 'Legal Victory' in Dispute

MM1602133895 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Feb 95 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Qatari Delegation Head Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Have Begun Countdown to Recovery of Hawar Islands"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Hague, Al-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Dr. Najib al-Nu'aymi, the Qatari Government's representative to the International Court of Justice [ICJ], has stressed that "the countdown to the recovery of the Hawar islands has begun." In an exclusive statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT following the ICJ's decision to intervene in the border dispute between Qatar and Bahrain, he said that "the door has not been closed to Saudi mediation. It is continuing and should continue." He said that the court's decision is a legal procedure which does not affect diplomatic endeavors.

Al-Nu'aymi added that, if Saudi Arabia manages to arrive at a solution acceptable to both parties and that leads to the border demarcation, Qatar will not object then to withdrawing the case from the court.

Al-Nu'aymi described the ICJ's decision as "a legal victory for Qatar over Bahrain." He said that "the problem in Bahrain is that the political position dominates the legal position, in contrast with the situation in Qatar, where politics and the law do not overlap."

Al-Nu'aymi, who is a legal adviser in the office of Qatari Heir Apparent and Defense Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, added that what his country is interested in is political and security stability in the region, pointing out that "the court's decision falls within this context."

Al-Nu'aymi regretted the absence of Dr. Husayn al-Baharnah, "who is a colleague and a friend. I hope to see him at the next stage." He also said that "Qatar's victory today (yesterday) was imposed on it. We did not seek victory for Qatar or defeat for Bahrain. All we wanted was a just and honorable solution."

He said that he was not surprised by Bahrain's absence from the session, since the court had prior knowledge of it. However, he was surprised by "its sudden decision to stay away from the court, when it has over recent years been inside it."

Al-Nu'aymi stressed that Bahrain can resume the case at any time if it wants to. He said that "it is up to it, of course. My advice is for it to change its legal team, which has not achieved for it what it wanted."

Al-Nu'aymi stressed that "the ICJ is now the quarter authorized to settle the dispute between the two countries." He said that "the case has now entered a new stage which will not end except with a final solution as regards sovereignty over the Hawar islands and Qit'at al-Jaradah, in addition to the demarcation of the sea borders."

Bahrain

Amir, Heir Propose Formulas for Settlement With Qatar

MM1602152195 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Feb 95 p1

[Unattributed report: "Bahrain Amir and Heir Apparent Call for Gulf Solution"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama—On the sidelines of two not-for-publication interviews with AL-HAYAH's chief editor [Jihad al-Khazin] on the eve of the International Court of Justice's ruling, Amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman and his Heir Apparent Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa have called for a settlement of the dispute with Qatar peacefully in the context of the [Gulf] Cooperation Council [GCC] or in any other context agreed upon by the two sides. They pointed out that Qatar [as published] accepts international arbitration as a final step provided the two parties agree in advance on the terms of such arbitration. The heir apparent called for bilateral negotiations or negotiations with the participation of Gulf parties, particularly as the GCC Manama summit last December agreed, without objection from any side, that problems between GCC member states should be solved within the context of the committee for the settlement of disputes.

Heir Apparent Welcomes Qatari Stand on Border Dispute

JN1602160795 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1203 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 16 Feb (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, Bahraini heir apparent and commander in chief of the Bahraini Defense Force, has made the following statement in reply to the speech Qatari Heir Apparent His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani made at the Qatari cabinet session Wednesday evening, 15 February 1995:

I would like to say how pleased I am with the statement my brother His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, heir apparent of fraternal Qatar, made on the desire to have the custodian of the two holy mosques Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz pursue his good offices on the Bahraini-Qatari dispute.

It also pleases me to emphasize our sincere wish to reach a fraternal solution that will be acceptable to the two countries and to call for the resumption of the good offices through a meeting between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the States of Qatar and Bahrain as soon as possible to adopt an implementation framework for the resumption of the talks to achieve a comprehensive fraternal solution in accordance with the resolutions of the 15th Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries' summit, which called for the settlement of all existing disputes among GCC countries on a bilateral level, and, if this is impossible, to refer the dispute to the GCC leaders during the forthcoming summit in Muscat.

We are fully confident that the attention given by the custodian of the two Holy Mosques His Majesty Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-Aziz and his brothers His Highness Qatari Amir Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani and our beloved amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah will have the greatest impact in bolstering the bases of stability and prosperity for the GCC people.

God grants success and guides steps on the sound course.

Kuwait

Envoy: Oil Derivative Exports to Iran To Increase

LD1602171595 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1427 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, 16 Feb (KUNA)—Kuwaiti Ambassador to Iran 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abdallah al-Duwaykh met today with Iranian Petroleum Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i. They reviewed bilateral oil cooperation and regional and international oil matters.

After the meeting, ambassador Al-Duwaykh told KUNA that during the meeting he confirmed Kuwait's readiness to increase the volume of its exports of oil derivatives and fertilizers to Iran.

He added that the effective participation of the companies affiliated to the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation at the 20th international trade fair held in Tehran last October reflected the importance the corporation attaches to the vast Iranian market.

Al-Duwaykh also said that the participation of Iranian technical teams in the operations to extinguish the oil well fires ignited by the Iraqi invading forces, before they were routed and expelled from Kuwaiti terrority in 1991, was one of the many forms of constructive cooperation between countries in the region.

He added that this participation also shows the competence and technical expertise that Iran had in this field.

The minister said that Kuwait is prepared to examine any joint oil ventures which Iran might propose, and which could be beneficial to both sides.

Iranian Petroleum Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i said he hopes the Kuwaiti oil minister will soon visit Iran. He added that he will send an official invitation to his Kuwaiti counterpart through diplomatic channels to ask him to visit Iran, following his own [Aqazadeh-Kho'i] visit to Kuwait.

Aqazedeh-Kho'i also expressed the satisfaction of the Iranian leadership with the continuous development of Kuwaiti-Iranian relations in various fields, and said that these relations have become special and should be regarded as an example to be followed among states of the region. The Iranian oil minister said that Iran welcomes an increase in industrial cooperation in the sphere of oil with Kuwait, and would warmly accept any Kuwaiti investments in the Iranian oil market and in the three free-trade zones of Kish, Qeshm and Chabahar.

He added that Iran attaches a special importance to bilateral and regional cooperation in the spheres of oil and energy. He talked about Iran's participation in building an oil refinery in Azerbaijan and in a project to lay a pipeline to export natural gas to Europe. He also mentioned Iran's participation in the international consortium for the development of three large Azeri oil fields in the Caspian Sea.

Aqazedeh denied press reports claiming that the National Iranian Oil Company intends to abandon its participation in the Azeri project as a result of (?Western), and particularly U.S. pressures. He stressed in this respect the Iranian Government's commitment to the executive terms of the contract of the international consortium.

Iran, which obtained about a five percent share in the aforementioned consortium, will invest about $350 million in the project, which covers three fields in the Caspian Sea with a total production capacity of about 4 billion barrels of oil.

Aqazedeh-Kho'i said that Iran is now becoming increasingly self- reliant in the execution of oil projects, such as building refineries and developing oil fields. He added that this helps save huge amounts of money in hard currency, especially as international companies charge high prices for the execution of projects, such as the southern field of Pars, in the Arabian Gulf, where production is expected to start within four years.

Iran submitted a bid for the development of the Pars field on the international market last year after a group of Western companies offered to execute the project for $2 billion. The Iranian Petroleum Ministry later signed deals with local companies to execute the project for about $900 million.

Shaykh Sa'd Hears Journalists' Views on Civil Service Law

LD1402200195 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 14 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At his office in al-Bayan Palace this afternoon, Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, heir apparent and chairman of the council of ministers, received the committee set up by the Kuwaiti Journalists Association to convey their views regarding the measures to implement paragraph 3, clause 25, of law 15 dated 1976 on the civil service, which bars civil servants from doing work for others, whether for remuneration, gratuity or neither, even outside official working hours, unless a written permission from the minister is obtained. The law stipulates that not obtaining such a permission is tantamount to a disciplinary infraction which would require questioning.

The heir apparent and chairman of the council of ministers stressed that the introduction of the relevant paragraph of the aforementioned law stems from the government's eagerness to apply laws to everyone without exception, in the public interest.

His highness also stressed the government's eagerness to adhere to the provisions of clause 36 of the State of Kuwait's Constitution on the right of verbal self expression, in writing or in other forms, in accordance with the provisions and conditions stipulated by law, bearing in mind that there must be a commitment to the supreme national interests required by that sublime freedom.

The heir apparent and chairman of the council of ministers pointed out during the meeting the government's eagerness to support and sponsor Kuwaiti journalism so as to enable it to continue its distinguished media and cultural role.

It is worth nothing that the Kuwaiti Journalists Association's committee included 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Sa'id, honorary chairman of the Kuwaiti Journalists Association; Ahmad Yusuf Bahbahani, chairman of the board of directors of the Kuwaiti Journalists Association; Muhammad 'Abd-al-Qadir al-Jasim, deputy editor of AL-WATAN; Faysal al-Qina'i, secretary of the Kuwaiti Journalists Association; 'Adnan al-Rashid, the association's treasurer; Dr. 'Ayid al-Manna', the association's consultant; Hidayah Sultan al-Salim, member of the board of directors; 'Adnan al-Sayyid, member of the board of directors; Khalid al-Diyab, member of the board of directors; and Fahd al-'Arrak, member of the board of directors.

Saudi Arabia

Government Satisfied With Bahrain-Qatar Talks

LD1702024295 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0038 GMT 17 Feb 95

[Statement issued by "an official source" to the Saudi News Agency; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the statement made by His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, Qatari heir apparent and defense minister, during the meeting held by the Council of Ministers of the State of Qatar on the border dispute between Qatar and Bahrain, and the statement made by His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, Bahraini, heir apparent and commander in chief of the defense force, in this regard, and the views expressed by the two sides regarding the persistence of the mediation efforts made by King Fahd Bin-'Abd- al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, to bring about a fraternal solution acceptable to the two countries;

The government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like to express its utmost satisfaction and pleasure at the joint positive course. It stresses that the custodian of the two holy mosques welcomes the resumption of mediation between the brothers in Bahrain and Qatar and that it will make every possible effort to reach a settlement that will end the dispute, fulfill the two sides' rights, and maintain the ties of fraternity, closeness, and amity between the two brotherly neighbors.

Contacts will be made with the two brotherly states to look into ways of resuming these endeavours.

CDLR Bulletin No. 34 on Saudi Events

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[Bulletin No. 34 of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights of Saudi Arabia (CDLR); issued on 10 February—received by fax 15 February]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Your Right to Know—Yemen and Sultan's Assumptions...

After careful scrutiny and deep analysis, that well-known "genius" Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, came to the conclusion that Yemen, is at present, at a weak stage in its history and therefore now is a golden opportunity to give Yemen and its leaders a painful lesson. This conclusion has led Sultan to deploy armed forces in the areas of al-Kharkhayr, Sharawrah and Jizan. However, we must ask whether Sultan's assumption of Yemen's inherent weakness is actually correct analysis of the situation or not?

In fact, contrary to Sultan's beliefs, many experts are of the opinion that the last Yemeni war has actually increased the strength and efficiency of their army for two reasons:

(i) the increase in actual combat experience

(ii) the unity of North and South Yemen has further increased military strength, particularly as South Yemen had previously been in receipt of modern weapons and equipment during the last crisis, all paid for by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Along with this, unity and cohesion amongst the armed forces has greatly increased since the war, as has the influence of Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdullah Salih within the military and within the country as a whole.

Many observers now believe that the weight of influence of the military is now far greater than that of the various tribal chiefs. President 'Ali 'Abdullah Salih has managed to consolidate his strength and influence throughout the country which has, in turn, increased the strength and loyalty of the army towards him. All of this leaves Yemen with one main problem, that is the economic problems facing the country. This is not a new problem as Yemen has not had a prosperous economy at any time in recent history. So, all in all, Yemen does not have a lot to lose.

From another standpoint, the emergence of an Islamic element on a large scale on the part of the Yemenis and an increase of religious observance within the army were decisive factors in the defeat of the Communists in South Yemen.

Regarding the Saudis, the country is staggering towards economic collapse and also suffers from internal turmoil. Perhaps more importantly the political leadership is disintegrating and it has become well-known that there are debilitating differences of opinion and personality between members of the royal family, and in particular King Fahd and Sultan. It has been said that 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz refused in no uncertain terms embroil the National Guard in any altercation with Yemen. Even within the army itself there has been a sharp increase in resentment and dissatisfaction amongst both the lower ranks and officers, especially as Sultan is particularly well known for corruption, embezzlement and fraud regarding army contracts etc., while having total control over the defence budget.

The situation in the country generally, and in the army in particular, is in a serious and continuous decline, with army morale at such a low point that the military is in no way prepared for armed conflict, never mind being, forced to fight Muslim neighbours just because of Sultans consuming hatred for their leader.

Yet another factor to consider, which further weakens Sultan's position while strengthening that of the Yemenis, is that of the American position. The Americans have made no secret of their objections regarding any Saudi conflict with Yemen. So far, the Americans have refused to provide the Saudi military with any logistical support and it is unimaginable that the Saudi army will take any steps without the backing of the Americans. At the same time the Americans have given President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih limited moral support. Even so, various observers have noticed some contradiction in the American stand, as while the Americans are refusing to support a war, they are at the same time directing Sultan psychologically towards a conflict he cannot win. Some observers have tried to explain this contradiction in that the Americans hold a secret wish of entangling Sultan in a no-win situation and thus ensuring his fall from power within the royal, family as he would inevitably be held responsible for any humiliating defeat. The Americans would have then rid themselves of one of the extreme elements within the royal family, as headed by Sultan and Salman. This would then enable them to push forward an American programme of reform, led by 'Abdullah Bin-'Abdal-'Aziz.

This indirect American psychological planning would seem to be effective, as Sultan has directed the 4th brigade to Kharkhayr. The 12th brigade in Tabuk has also been placed on alert for transfer to Kharkhayr. Mercenaries recruited by the government have also been formed into a fighting group. Various air force squadrons have been transferred to the expected battle zones.

This, therefore, is the personal project of Sultan, based on his assumption that Yemen is chronically weak and therefore an easy target.

It is at this point that we would like to warn our brothers in the armed forces against their entanglement in the execution of Sultan's hatred.

It is extremely important for rational people, both inside and outside the royal family, to administer a sharp slap on the bullying hand of Sultan, as it is obvious that he has no realisation of the horrific consequences of his plans.

We would remind the Nation that this man has challenged the Nation before and has thrown our scholars and leaders in prison, in the mistaken belief that these actions would give him greater control.

We repeat yet again our appeal to our Muslim brothers in the armed forces, of the great necessity of avoiding the spillage of Muslim blood, and to realise that they are being controlled by a man who has betrayed his religion and his people.

Our appeal also extends to our Yemeni brothers, and we would implore them to use self control and to increase attempts to solve the problem peacefully.

News

Group Resignations

Ten members of the Shura (Consultancy) Council tendered their resignations to Shaykh Bin-Jubayr the chairman of the Council. The chairman attempted to change the minds of the members but they insisted on presenting their resignations to the King. This group decided to resign due to the attitude of belittlement and contempt shown towards them by The King and his brothers, in all state affairs, especially with regard to the recent increases in taxes and tariffs.

The King had intended to place the whole project of tariff and tax increases on the shoulders of the Council as their idea and their responsibility. However, the Council unanimously refused to accept that responsibility and even the chairman, Bin-Jubayr, failed to convince the Council members to support the King.

Most Council members deeply, resent their treatment and it has to been said that Shaykh 'Abdallah Nasif, the deputy chairman, is very concerned and feels that he has been personally humiliated. Shaykh Nasif was especially concerned because he had attempted to create a real credibility for the Council, but his efforts have been undermined by recent events. The Shaykh made a note of his personal concerns regarding the tax and tariff increases and it is thought that he is also seriously considering resignation.

The Committee values the stand taken by the Council members and the stand of Shaykh Nasif and we would encourage the remaining members to take similar stands and to avoid being used and abused by the regime to gain legitimacy.

Khalid Al-Faysal and Aseer

The Committee has recently received reports from Abha, Mahayil and Bishah regarding a number of human rights violations and the condition of the area in general.

In Mahayil, Shaykh 'Awad al-Ghamidi and Mr Muhammad Khalqi were arrested in the al-Nimas area. Shaykh Gharman Ibn-Zafir al-'Amri was arrested on the personal order from Khalid al-Faysal. The Shaykh was arrested after midnight. An assaulted was made on his house preceding his arrest, terrifying his wife, children and elderly parents. Also in al-Nimas, Shaykh Khalaf 'Awad al-Shihri, Imam of a mosque in the area was arrested.

Khalid al-Faysal fired the preacher, Shaykh Humud Bin Zhahir Bani-Shihr, from his position of Imam in the mosque he built himself. The Shaykh was also fired from his job as manager of the preaching office in al-Nimas and he was banned from any participation in relief activities, public speaking etc.

The people of the area harbour deep feelings of resentment due to these punitive actions taken against Shaykh Humud, who has an excellent reputation in the area for his compassion, charitable work, preaching etc.

It is thought that his charitable activities and his reputation are the cause of personal jealousy on the part of Khalid al-Faysal, who then decided to put a stop on the Shaykh's activities.

The feelings of resentment spread amongst the of Bani-Shihr, Bani-'Amr and the people of Tihama, as the Shaykh was greatly respected by them.

It is also worth mentioning that Khalid al-Faysal was behind the firing and exiling of a group of scholars, namely, Shaykh 'Ayid al- Qarni, Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd-al-Khahqal-Qarni, Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahim al- Tahhan, Shaykh al-Bayhan, Shaykh 'Awad al-Qarni, Shaykh Sa'd al- 'Amri, Shaykh Sulayman Bin-Nafi, and Shaykh Sa'id Bin-Musfir al-Qahtani.

The Committee would like to call upon the people of the area to stand up and refuse this tyranny perpetrated by Khalid al-Faysal, who is so proud of his achievements in controlling the people of the area and boasts of enslaving the population.

More Arrests in al-Qasim

Last Monday 6th February 1995, Shaykh Suleyman al-Rumaykhani was arrested in Qasim and searched in public. Also in Qasim, within the last few days, Mr Ibrahim Salamah al-Dakhilallah was arrested.

Women Not Spared

Two weeks ago the authorities arrested the wife of one of the detainees from Al Hudayf, herself from the famous

Al-Suwailim family. This honourable lady's only crime was the expression of her resentment over the detention of her husband and other reformers.

No Respect

On the first day of Ramadan, in the Sacred Mosque in Mecca, after the finish of the Isha (night) prayers, groups of police attacked young people collecting donations for the official relief agencies. The police destroyed the collection boxes, confiscated the donations collected and then arrested the young Muslims involved and imprisoned them.

It would appear that the Government has no inkling as to the way people think and react. They do not realise that if these young Muslims are prevented from releasing their energy and enthusiasm in such charitable, non-political activities by the ruthless actions of the authorities, they will turn their energies towards supporting the Committee and its publications and other reform activities.

Believe It or Not

After a serious study, a number of buildings were designated for demolition in order to enable the widening of a road. The demolitions were to take place in an area 700 metres away from the Sacred Mosque in Mecca.

One of the buildings belonged to Prince Sultan. The demolitions took place with his agreement. However, the people of Mecca were then surprised to see that his property had been rebuilt over a larger area.

Obviously, after Sultan had been paid compensation for his "loss", he then decided that the road was already wide enough, and so rebuilt his property!

Electricity For Royalty

The people to the North of Jeddah hold great feelings of resentment due to the lack of electricity supply in their area. These feelings are deepened by the knowledge that the Government supplies electricity only to the residence of 'Abd-al-Rahman Bin- 'Abd-al-'Aziz whilst the people go without.

Grain Imports

The Government made an unusual declaration regarding the import of vast quantities of grain amounting to thousands of tons. This declaration was widely reported in the press and media. It is believed by observers that the, reason behind this declaration is that the Government had sent letters to farmers to say that there was absolutely no hope of their harvests being accepted by the authorities and therefore the farmers should not put forward proposals for agricultural subsidies.

Maha al-Sudayri Seeks Revenge

Maha al-Sudayri and her husband Nayif are presently suffering great psychological distress after exposure in the bulletin a few weeks ago of their involvement in various scandals. They both live isolated inside the royal family due to this succession of scandals and are nonv seeking revenge.

Prince Nayif, along with some of his Shaykhs, is trying to get a fatwa issued against the Committee on the ground of slander. He is also attempting to bring a case forward in the English Courts.

Maha al-Sudayri herself is trying to exact a bloodier revenge, as she hired a gang to try and harm the family of one of the Committee members.

The Committee has come to know that from information she has gained from Nayif's intelligence personnel, that she holds a certain Committee member personally responsible for their, exposure and involvement in various scandals.

People of Turabah Complain

The people of Turabah and surrounding villages sent a complaint to the Committee regarding their inability to operate their electricity generators due to the increase in the cost of diesel fuel. They protested at the Government propaganda which insists that the electricity supply has reached even into the farthest corners of the country.

Private Hunting Areas

The National Institution for the Protection of Wildlife recently declared five more protected zones. The most important zone is the al-Taysiyah area Qasim, which is 40 km in length and 30 km in breadth.

Sources close to Prince Sultan said that the aim of this protected zone was to ensure the enjoyment of the royal pastime of hunting with falcons.

The declaration of such protected zones results in the forced removal of approximately 10,000 Bedouins from the powerful tribe of "Harb" and the forbidding of the use of the area as pasture for sheep and other animals. This area suffered a similar disaster before when his brother Prince Mish'al Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz confiscated the most valuable areas, al-Busaytinat and al-Ajradi valley.

'Abdallah Bin-Ulayyan al-Rashidi, Sultan's Victim

In Hafar al-Batin, 'Abdallah Bin-Ulayyan al-Rashidi was killed at the hands of Sultan's henchmen. His body was found in one of Sultan's protected zones. The man's crime was collecting wild mushrooms in the area. The victim is a father of seven children, the oldest being thirteen years old.

It is worth mentioning that a number of citizens were arrested last week after they mistakenly trespassed on Sultan's protected area. They were detained in prison for several days.

CDLR Press Release on Saudi Events

MS1702101995 London CDLR MONITOR in English 15 Feb 95

[Press Release from the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights of Saudi Arabia (CDLR); issued in London on 15 February—received by fax 16 February]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dr. Muhammad A.S. al-Mas'ari, a 48 years old professor of physics, is a political activist who has been struggling for legitimate human rights and basic political reforms in Saudi Arabia during the last thirty years. A respected expert in his field, Professor al-Mas'ari worked for many years behind the scenes trying quietly to persuade the regime on the need for enlightened reforms. In the late eighties Professor al-Mas'ari and other reformers, disillusioned by the arrogance and rigidity of the regime, became publicly vocal and critical to the tyrannic, inept and extremely corrupt regime of Al Sa'ud. They objected specifically to the misapplication of Islam in its mutilated form adopted by al Sa'ud to foster and legitimise their corrupt absolute power. This "Al Sa'ud Islam" is fundamentalism at it's worst, defacing the tolerant and enlightened image of Islam as advocated and understood by the reformers. The letter of Shawwal (spring 1991), which was signed by over four hundred thinkers, professors, judges, businessmen and public figures, argued for:

1. a consultative council with all powers to check and supervise the government.
2. accountability of government both politically and judicially.
3. full independence of the judiciary, bolstering it's power and extension of judicial checks to a constitutional and administrative, public and private affairs.
4. basic human rights.
5. proper management of public wealth and an end to the rampant corruption of the royals and their, cronies and lackeys; and
6. sweeping reforms of the inept administration and the public sector.

The totalitarian regime responded by blacklisting the signatories, tapping their phones and prohibiting them from travel abroad. The reformers were not intimidated and persisted with their demands for reforms. They continued their efforts by submitting, in early Somer, 1992, the famous "Memorandum of Advice" expounding the "letter of Shawwal" and detailing the needed reforms for realistic and practical implementation.

In the spirit of all despotic and doomed regimes, the rulers were this time even more vehement in their slander and vilification of the reformers, intensifying their persecution.

Aware about the impossibility of bringing any change without the pressure and organised participation of the public, the reformers established the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) on the 3rd of May 1993. Although this very moderate and modest step was chosen, the regime responded violently by firing Professor al-Mas'ari, Spokesman of CDLR, and the other founding members from their jobs and closing their law offices. Few days later 2.30 after midnight Professor al-Mas'ari house was raided by the secret police, in a manner worthy of the Gestapo or the KGB. His entire library was seized and he himself incarcerated. His office at the Physics Dept. in the university was stormed and contents confiscated. Few weeks later other members and supporters of CDLR were detained too in a campaign of terror continuing well in the Summer of 1993.

Professor al-Mas'ari was detained for more than six months without trial or any formal charges. He was tortured and—apart from one single visit by his Son—deprived from any family or friendly contact. Two days before his release he was subjected to an irregular Show Trial on trumped up "Heresy" charges for the duration of 20 minutes in the Riyadh supreme court ending essentially in a warning to cease and desist from any future "heretic action against the legitimate ruler"!! After his release Professor al-Mas'ari and other reformers concluded, that it is necessary to find abroad a free and secured public platform for the oppressed reform movement.

Being prohibited from travel and without valid travel documents, a route through Yemen with illegal entry, illegal stay and illegal documents was necessary. The stay in Yemen was short, strictly secret using pseudo-names and unpaved roads for travel and under steady protection by armed guards.

A few days after arrival in London on Monday the 18th of April 1994 professor al-Mas'ari applied for political asylum. The Immigration and Nationality Dept (IND) rejected on the 24th of November 1994 that application and ordered the removal of Professor al-Mas'ari from the UK as an illegal entrant to Yemen on the grounds of Yemen being a safe country. Neither merits of the case nor any discussion of it's substance was undertaken in the refusal letter. An appeal was duly submitted in time and was scheduled for hearing on the Tuesday 23/1/1995 but was adjourned on the Home Office Solicitor's request.

New hearing date is Tuesday the 21st of February 1995, 10 am, at:
The Immigration Appeals Centre at Hatton Cross,
York House,
2-3 Dukes Green,
Feltham, Middlesex, TW14 OLR.

The hearing may well turn into a trial of the tyrannic Saudi regime as well as for it's corrupt relations to some powerful business interests and privileged oligarchic circles here in the UK, which run contrary to the true interests of both the British and Saudi people.

London, Wednesday the 15th of February 1995.

Yemen

Al-Iryani Views Border Talks With Saudi Arabia

JN1602191395 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1745 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani by Kamal Tarabayh; place and date not given; from the "Political Week" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Tarabayh] Your Excellency Yemeni Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani: You are most welcome to the program.

[Al-Iryani] You are welcome.

[Tarabayh] Mr. Minister: First, we have to begin with the following question: Where are the Yemeni-Saudi border negotiations, especially since the Yemeni negotiating team has been in Riyadh for over three weeks without reaching any agreement?

[Al-Iryani] First, I would like to point out that the ongoing negotiations are not addressing the border dispute, per se. The ongoing negotiations are aimed at reaching agreement on a memorandum of understanding that spells out a mechanism for negotiations on the border dispute. As you must be well aware, the wording of the memorandum of understanding must be unbiased. Such a memorandum must set the grounds for future negotiations, and outline the nature of future ties between Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Hence, the ongoing negotiations do not address the borders per se, but rather the memorandum of understanding, which is a prerequisite if the two sides are to conduct their negotiations fairly and equitably.

[Tarabayh] In your opinion, what are the views that have thus far precluded agreement on such a memorandum? What are the obstacles standing in the way of this?

[Al-Iryani] Certainly, it is differences of opinion which are precluding this. When two sides meet, their views might differ. The Republic of Yemen believes that such a memorandum must provide for the implementation of the al-Ta'if agreement, which must be viewed as a framework that addresses the overall aspects of Yemeni-Saudi ties. Besides, the Republic of Yemen believes that negotiations on the borders not demarcated in the al-Ta'if agreement must go on for a specific time frame. If the two sides reach agreement, that will be fine. Otherwise, they must head for arbitration. This is the essence of the proposal submitted by the Republic of Yemen. As for the brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, they submitted different views, which were certainly not to the liking of the Republic of Yemen. These views deem legal certain issues which are not endorsed by the Republic of Yemen at present. Nonetheless, these views can be submitted for negotiations when the negotiations start, and not at present.

[Tarabayh] Your Excellency the Yemeni foreign minister: A European troika delegation toured the states and parties directly concerned with the Middle East peace negotiations. Do you believe Europe can play a basic and effective role in boosting the peace process in the face of this overwhelming and unilateral U.S. presence on the international and regional arenas?

[Al-Iryani] In fact, the European role depends not only on the overwhelming U.S. presence, but also on the wish of the concerned parties. I believe the Arab side would like to see and wishes for an effective European role alongside the U.S. role. However, the U.S.-Israeli relationship is an obstacle to that. Therefore, I believe, the European role will only be secondary, unless it is in complete harmony with the U.S. role.

[Tarabayh] Even if the U.S. role fully supports Israel?

[Al-Iryani] Therefore, I wanted to say, it is difficult for the European role to be in complete harmony with the U.S. role because of its full support for Israel.

[Tarabayh] Mr. Minister: During the recent visit to France by President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and his accompanying delegation, did you encourage France, in its capacity as the chairman of the EU Council of Ministers, to play a more effective role in the Middle East?

[Al-Iryani] The Yemeni leadership highly trusts the French leadership and Government to play the role to which France has accustomed us. It is a more independent and certainly more effective role.

[Tarabayh] During the Gulf war, some Arab and Western states blamed Yemen for supporting Iraq. Today, after Iraq's official recognition of Kuwait and its response to most relevant UN Security Council resolutions, what, in your view, are the reasons that prevent the UN Security Council from lifting the international embargo imposed on that country?

[Al-Iryani] In my view, there is no reason at all for maintaining the embargo against Iraq, except the U.S. mastery over the UN Security Council.

[Tarabayh] So, you are demanding and insisting that the international community, or the UN Security Council, lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq? Have you held any international or regional contacts in this regard?

[Al-Iryani] This has been Yemen's stand since the end of the Gulf war and Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. It is a stand which has not changed. We have not approved the continued siege imposed on the Iraqi people. In all our contacts and meetings with all officials anywhere in the world, we stress this stand, not only out of our concern for the Iraqi people, but also for the security and stability of the region in the region. The Iraqi people's suffering will only be a cause for future instability. It is in the interest of states in this region, including Yemen, that this siege be lifted, for it will certainly lead to feelings that will be carried by the next generations of the Iraqi people. Such feelings will not serve the interest of the neighboring countries, including Yemen.

[Tarabayh] Do you regard the Saudi-Yemeni disagreement on the border and other issues as the outcome of Yemen's stand during the Gulf war?

[Al-Iryani] This is untrue. There is categorical evidence that the Yemeni-Saudi disagreement has not been caused by Yemen's stand on Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. The present circumstances do not allow me to explain this evidence, which was proved during the Gulf crisis. The

Saudi stand conveyed to Yemen was that the disagreement was not caused by Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

[Tarabayh] Mr. Minister, it was noticed over the past few months that some Gulf and non-Gulf Arab states held contacts and established direct or indirect relations with Israel. Has Yemen held contacts with Israel directly or through a third party?

[Al-Iryani] So far, we have not had any contacts or relations [with Israel]. The matter depends on the progress of the peace process, which is the first and final arbiter.

[Tarabayh] In other words, no contacts are currently being held with Israel or Israeli delegations?

[Al-Iryani] There is nothing of this.

[Tarabayh] Mr. Minister: No doubt you followed the four-way summit held recently in Cairo among three Arab countries and Israel. My question is the following: In light of the hampered Arab-Israeli talks, on more than one track, does Yemen believe that inviting Israel to attend the Cairo summit was justified?

[Al-Iryani] There is no doubt that the parties to the issue are the ones who are concerned about this. Certainly, they cannot address such invitation if they do not believe it is justified.

[Tarabayh] The Middle East and the world are preoccupied with the nuclear issue. The United States and Israel accused Iran of possessing, or of trying to possess or develop, a nuclear program. Egypt and other Arab states called on Israel to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Everybody knows that Israel possesses many nuclear warheads. What is Yemen's stand on this issue?

[Al-Iryani] Yemen's stand will be within the framework of a unified Arab stand. If there is no such a stand each country can make the appropriate decision.

[Tarabayh] Being a basic and influential party in the Gulf, in addition to Iran, do you have information about an Iranian nuclear program?

[Al-Iryani] We have absolutely no knowledge of this. If we take into consideration what is taking place in the world now, we will see that many countries are trying to possess nuclear weapons. If Iran is trying to possess such weapons, why should it not be allowed to do so while others can?

[Tarabayh] What is level of relations now between Yemen and Iran?

[Al-Iryani] The level of relations is good; they are relations between two sisterly Islamic countries.

[Tarabayh] How are the relations with Iraq?

[Al-Iryani] The relations with Iraq are at their best.

[Tarabayh] Mr. Minister: It is known that Yemen is basically interested in organizing its domestic affairs following the bloody confrontation waged by the central government against the separatists in the south. Does Yemen have an Arab role to play in light of the current situation, particularly with regard to helping the parties to the conflict in Algeria embark on a peaceful dialogue and to save Algeria from the current cycle of violence?

[Al-Iryani] I do not think Yemen can have any impact on the events in Algeria. We only hope that all parties will resort to negotiations.

[Tarabayh] Regarding the domestic situation in Yemen, do you believe that the effects of the war which took place recently between the separatists in the south and the central authority have completely ended? Does Yemen now demand the extradition of the leaders of separation who are outside the country?

[Al-Iryani] I would like to say to you that the effects of the separation attempt have ended one hundred percent. And Yemen now does not demand the extradition of separatists.

[Tarabayh] Will there be a cabinet reshuffle in Yemen?

[Al-Iryani] I do not expect this because the government is not yet one year old.

[Tarabayh] What is your assessment of the economic and living conditions in Yemen? There are many difficulties in many fields. Can the Yemeni Government face the economic, living, and social responsibilities in the country?

[Al-Iryani] There is no doubt that the situation is very difficult and requires a daring and decisive reform program. This is what is being discussed within the coalition government.

[Tarabayh] Are there any new agreements with Western and French oil companies to explore for oil in Yemen?

[Al-Iryani] There are no new agreements, however, there are new discoveries which will be developed soon.

[Tarabayh] We want to ask Yemeni Foreign Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani about his assessment of the Saudi stand vis-a-vis the Yemeni proposal?

[Al-Iryani] I do not want to talk about the stand of the other party. I only talk about Yemen's stand.

[Tarabayh] What does the Yemeni Government put forward?

[Al-Iryani] As I said, the Yemeni Government presents the al- Ta'if agreement with all its articles as the framework of the overall Yemeni-Saudi relations. The borders must be demarcated according to the al-Ta'if agreement. The borders from southern Najran until the point of convergence with the Sultanate of Oman have not been demarcated. Therefore, we believe that talks should be held over this for a specific period of time, and if no agreement is reached we will seek arbitration.

[Tarabayh] President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih said in a speech he delivered in Hadhramawt recently that the continuation of differences with Saudi Arabia will force Yemen to refer the issue to the Arab League or the United Nations. Does this mean that the Yemeni Government is not satisfied with the ongoing talks in Riyadh?

[Al-Iryani] It is not a matter of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This is a firm fact. As the president said, this aims at avoiding a dispute which does not serve regional security and stability. Resorting to international organizations is certainly the best alternative.

[Tarabayh] And if this is in vain?

[Al-Iryani] No. We do not think that resorting to international organizations will be in vain or useless if they are sought by two countries. Usually, such international organizations are helpful.

[Tarabayh] Mr. Minister: Are there any Saudi military concentrations in the disputed areas?

[Al-Iryani] As far as I know—of course, I am not following up the military situation—there are no new significant concentrations. The former concentrations moved away from the positions in which they were stationed, as it was announced.

[Tarabayh] Does the information, which you received from the Yemeni negotiating delegation in Riyadh led by Shaykh 'Abdallah al- Ahmar, show that an agreement on a memorandum of understanding is imminent?

[Al-Iryani] I believe that if what the custodian of the two holy mosques said at the cabinet was placed within a legal framework it will be the real solution. He said that the border dispute between Yemen and the kingdom should be resolved on the basis of the al-Ta'if agreement and the principle of not harming either side. Frankly, because of these two principles, the talks have been obstructed until now. If these two principles had been accepted and placed within a legal framework, things would have been resolved. We are negotiating over a memorandum of understanding, not over borders.

[Tarabayh] There were many reports on the possibility of holding a Yemeni-Saudi summit in Riyadh. What is the status of this summit?

[Al-Iryani] The negotiating team traveled to Saudi Arabia to reach an understanding memo which will be a preparatory document for holding the summit.

[Tarabayh] Will the Yemeni delegation stay in Riyadh until after the blessed month of Ramadan?

[Al-Iryani] I do not believe so.

[Tarabayh] Mr. Minister: Would you like to say anything at the end of this program to the Yemeni people and to the Arab listeners?

[Al-Iryani] I hope all will have a blessed month and happy 'Id and will enjoy security, stability, peace, and prosperity.

[Tarabayh] What are your hopes regarding the Yemeni-Saudi dispute?

[Al-Iryani] I hope God will help all safeguard the interests of both parties.

[Tarabayh] In other words, will the Yemeni delegation return to Sanaa soon after reaching the understanding memo?

[Al-Iryani] Optimisim brings about good things.

[Tarabayh] Thank you, Mr. Minister.

[Al-Iryani] Thank you.

Salih Comments on Saudi Dispute, Negotiations

JN1602141495 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, has said: Within the framework of dialogue, our country is pushing for a peaceful and fraternal solution to the border problem with the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He said signs are positive.

He said this in an interview with London radio aired yesterday evening. Answering a question on the length of the period of negotiations and whether this is a positive sign or evidence of the deep differences between the two sides, the brother president said: We are certain that the results will be positive.

Asked whether recent statements from Sanaa indicate the complete opposite of the above, the brother president said: Well, this depends on the negotiations. Some days, there is optimism. At other times, there are differences of opinion, and this is natural because this happens in such negotiations. Sometimes, the atmosphere is good; and sometimes there is some misunderstanding. However, we are optimistic and we expect a peaceful, fraternal solution as part of bilateral dialogue. We are continuing our contacts with the brothers in Riyadh and the signs have been positive.

On the nature of the differences that prolonged the negotiations so far, the brother president said: There are differences regarding three points between the two delegations and these points are still being discussed. God willing, they will reach an agreement on the formulation of a memorandum of understanding which will fix a mechanism for border negotiations [words indistinct]. This is a an attempt to come up with a mechanism to solve the border problem between the two countries.

On recent press reports about fresh buildups, the brother president said: You can ask the other side. Our information indicates that there was a buildup at the outset of the negotiations. However, things are quiet so far on the border and the negotiations are under way.

Replying to a question on the possibility of the failure of the current negotiations and whether the Yemeni side would resort to international arbitration, the brother president said: First of all, we are optimistic in light of King Fahd's statements—made by the Saudi information minister following the cabinet session under King Fahd. We are optimistic about the approaches King Fahd proposed on accepting the al-Ta'if agreement as an integral system and on the formation of committees to normalize ties and a committee to demarcate the border. God willing, this will reflect positively on the memorandum of understanding and will be an advanced step.

On the existence of some kind of contradiction at times between the statements made in Sanaa and the statements made by the negotiating team in Riyadh, the brother president said: There is no contradiction. Some foreign media interpret things their own way. There is no contradiction between the statements issued from Sanaa and those of the Yemeni delegation in Riyadh. There is one shared view. God willing, the delegations of the two countries will succeed in formulating a memorandum of understanding, as King Fahd said, on the basis of no harm to any party and the two parties' commitment to the al-Ta'id agreement and to the formation of committee to normalize relations and to demarcate the rest of the borders. This will be an important step. If these points are stated in the memorandum of understanding, then this will bring views closer toward future solutions.

Asked about visiting Saudi Arabia, the brother president said: The visit is not a problem if we reach an understanding on this formula. It will be a step in the course of normalization and a step toward future solutions to Yemeni-Saudi ties and resolving the longstanding border problems.

Riyadh Talks 'Proceeding Well'; Only 'Minor' Disagreements

MM1602122995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Feb 95 pp1, 4

[Report by Sulayman Nimr in Riyadh and Iqbal 'Ali 'Abdallah in Sanaa: "Al-Ahmar Tells AL-HAYAH: Good Progress in Saudi-Yemeni Negotiations"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] While the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz said he would welcome a settlement of the pending border issues with Yemen, Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, speaker of the Yemeni House of Representatives and head of the Yemeni delegation now in Riyadh, has reaffirmed that the Saudi-Yemeni negotitions, which have been in progress in the Saudi capital for more than three weeks, "are proceeding well in a positive and fraternal atmosphere." He added that the "issues under discussion are close to a solution and some good progress has been made."

Shaykh 'Abdallah was commenting, in a statement to AL-HAYAH, on President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih's statement about continuing differences in the Saudi-Yemeni negotiations. [passage omitted]

The Yemeni House of Representatives speaker, however, admitted that there are still some "minor" points of disagreement. He expects the Saudi and Yemeni teams to meet again after 'Id al-Fitr [end of Ramadan feast] if no agreement is reached within two days on the disputed points.

Shaykh 'Abdallah said: "The negotiations might be postponed until next month. We can give our two countries a chance to re-examine the points of disagreement." But he emphasized that "there are many major points of agreement and that will be stated in the minutes so as not to go back to these points in the next rounds of negotiations." [passage omitted]

Cabinet Views Economic, Security Situation

JN1502190095 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The cabinet held a regular meeting this afternoon, chaired by Prime Minister brother 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al- Ghani. At the outset, the cabinet listened to a report by Deputy Prime Minister brother 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Anisi on the outcome of the two visits paid to the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates by His Excellency brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih.

The cabinet highly appreciated the outcome of the summits which the brother president held with His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id and His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan al Nuhayyan.

Afterward, the cabinet heard a report by the brother deputy minister of supply and trade on the economic situation. It then resumed discussing the economic issue, including the increase in commodity and food prices. In this regard, the cabinet expressed satisfaction with the level of implementing the decisions made at the previous meeting, particularly apprehending and punishing those who tamper with prices.

The cabinet also discussed a paper submitted by the Supply and Trade Ministry on the proposed mechanism to distribute the basic food commodities among the various governorates. After adding some necessary procedures and amendments to the paper, the cabinet approved the proposed mechanism.

The cabinet also heard a report by the brother deputy interior minister on the security situation, including the arrest of a gang that stole cars and pursued drug smuggling and rape. The gang was arrested in the Sanaa municipality on Monday [13 February]. The cabinet recited a Koranic verse for the souls of two martyrs from the security forces who fell when the security and military police men stormed the hideout of this dangerous gang. It also wished the wounded security personnel a speedy recovery.

Salim Salih on War's Aftermath, Border Dispute

95AE0018A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Jan 95 p 5

[Interview with Salim Salih, by Sawsan Abu-Husayn, in Cairo; date not given: "Opposition Accepts 'Open' Trial in Yemen"—first four paragraphs are AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Former Yemeni Presidential Council member Salim Salih has stressed, in an exclusive interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, the importance of a solution to the border problem between Saudi Arabia and Yemen on the basis of the geographical situation in the two countries and the special relationship between the two peoples.

Salim Salih emphasized the rejection of the disputes of the past and the brisk pursuit of the creation of new policies to settle Yemen's internal and external problems and the avoidance of the positions of international blocs, whose uselessness has already been proved.

He announced the Group of 16's readiness to accept the principle of a trial, a process of comprehensive national reconciliation, and particiation in rebuilding what the war has destroyed.

Salim Salih also revealed that there have been recent contacts with President Salih, with the aim of bridging the gap between the government's and the opposition's points of view.

[Abu-Husayn] Do you think the border dispute between Saudi Arabia and Yemen has been contained by recent efforts?

[Salih] In this sensitive matter, we were optimistic when the normalization of relations was proposed in the framework of Arab-Arab mediation. But if they want to enter into genuine reconciliation at the regional level, then it is utterly essential that they first undertake domestic reconciliation, among all parties, and to reaffirm their abandonment of the framework of former international blocs followed by the regimes in the north and the south. These were a great mistake. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that Yemen is an inseparable part of the Arabian Peninsula—in geographical, religious, and cultural terms. It must be reaffirmed that our destiny is shared and our interests are one. This is the standard for the dealings between us and our brothers in Saudi Arabia.

[Abu-Husayn] Do you think the end of the Saudi-Yemeni dispute will come through Egyptian and Syrian intervention, or are there other forums for dealing with the subject?

[Salih] The border dispute is well known. There have been efforts, contacts, and working committees, but first of all the deadlock must be broken, and we must begin to deal with the special brotherly relationship that our geographical and historical situation imposes on us. Of course, Egyptian and Syrian efforts have relieved the tension of the dispute. In this context, there is no justification for exploiting the slogan of reconciliation and then escalating the situation on the border when what we need is the nonintroduction of new problems—especially as we have still not solved other issues. So we once again reaffirm the importance of continuing the dialogue and contacts through well-known channels, in order to avoid the use of violence and force. Border problems exist everywhere, and the solutions to them are also well known.

Dealing With Problems of Displaced Persons

[Abu-Husayn] Let us go back to the subject of the domestic situation in Yemen and the details of the problems created by the war, which still affect the political map.

[Salih] The most important and most complex effects still remain. These are the exclusion of the south, with all its civil, military, and cultural institutions, and its parties and leaders, from the circle of decisionmaking. And this is the case with individuals who held important and influential positions, both in the unitary state or prior to that.

But I would like to correct some of the erroneous facts. The opposition abroad, specifically the MAWJ [National Front of the Yemeni Opposition did not organize itself solely to threaten the regime or disrupt the security and stability of our country. We emerged after military defeat, and our direct mission was to gather in the displaced persons and emigrants to various Arab countries, to treat the wounds that the war had inflicted with all its cruelties.

For seven months we have done all we can to find solutions to the citizens' problems. We decided it was essential to return them to the country, to accept the status quo, and adapt to it. There are no fewer than 2,000 civilian and military leaders of all specializations, and they are still abroad, trying to manage for themselves, with the help of the brotherly humanitarian assistance offered by some Arab countries, and the United Arab Emirates. But the special situation with this group still needs to be followed with special care, as they sometimes have problems obtaining identification and arranging their families' affairs.

Thus we find no justification for the continuation of the rift between the opposition and the regime, especially as we have submitted a program for comprehensive national reconciliation on bases approved by Yemenis of all persuasions inside the country. It was submitted after President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih's speech in Aden on 30 November, on the occasion of the South's national independence. All the opposition parties inside the country viewed it favorably and found that there was a new spirit and mentality, actually thinking of dealing with the conditions and solving existing problems. Yet the press statements are inconsistent and contradictory. Even so, we must search for common ground between this side and that to enable ourselves to restart the dialogue among the parties in power and those of the opposition in order to create comprehensive national reconciliation.

We Accept the Trial in Principle

[Abu-Husayn] In the framework of national reconciliation, do you have ideas on how to deal with the issue of the "16" in light of the inconsistency of press statements in this regard?

[Salih] In its program, the MAWJ opposition movement defined this subject and spoke of it at the beginning of the important points. We think that the true and practical first step is to end this enduring conflict that has been so troubling to Yemen and to eliminate all obstacles to the creation of the sort of agreement and climate that will assist dialogue. In spite of that, we are prepared to accept the principle of a trial, because it will be the trial of the century in Yemen, when it gets into the topics of democracy and human rights violations.

[Abu-Husayn] So you are prepared to accept a trial in principle?

[Salih] Yes, we accept a trial on condition that it be in front of the media's cameras and attended by those we ourselves authorize to defend us, and that all the issues should be clear to the public at home and abroad, especially as we are facing a mass of major and crucial charges. This does not affect only us in Yemen; it also affects the regional situation in general. We will act responsiblly during this trial, and we will win it, because we have no personal problems with it.

[Abu-Husayn] There were contacts between you and President Salih at the beginning of this year. Were there any positive signs regarding reconciliation?

[Salih] Contacts are ongoing, and we are always talking on the telephone. There is never a permanent rift among us Yemenis, but the important thing is the content of the contacts, their objective, and the outcome we reach. Even so, we are reaching out to any person, whether in the General People's Congress or the Reform Grouping Party, or the person of President Salih himself, who is trying to make his way to find solutions to the current crisis, which is by any standards a suffocating crisis at the political, economic, and social levels. We are always promoting democratic dialogue as the ideal method and solution, and as the alternative to threats, violence, and the use of force. We truly are demanding this reconciliation so that Yemen might find a way out of this historic predicament.

[Abu-Husayn] Has President Salih, in his contacts with you, imposed any conditions for reconciliation?

[Salih] President Salih has always offered the principle of return, but how can that return take place without a solution to the basic problems, including the issue of the emigrants?

UN Informed of Details of 'Fresh' Iranian 'Attack'

JN1602152595 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq today officially informed the United Nations about the details of the fresh Iranian aggression. In a letter sent by Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf to UN Secretary General *Butrus Butrus-Ghali*, the foreign minister stressed that the interrogation of the Iranian prisoners by the competent authorities showed that an entire military division had moved a week before the aggression from Dezful to the Shatt 'Ali region east of Hawr al-Hawizah, and that Iranian regiments had been reconnoitering Iraqi positions in preparation for the attack.

The letter said the Iranian aggression is a blatant violation of Security Council Resolution No. 598, noting that it is not the first of its kind. The Iranian regime would not have managed to carry out such an aggression had it not been for the unjust U.S. ban on flights south of 32d parallel.

The foreign minister hoped that the UN secretary general will take the necessary measures to prevent a repeat of this aggression. He also hoped that the UN secretary general will put pressure on the U.S. Administration to remove the ban on Iraqi flights so Iraq may exercise its sovereign right over its territories and in its airspace, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Concluding the letter, the foreign minister drew the attention of the world community to the suspicious coordination that preceded this aggression between Iranian agents and Kuwaiti officials.

Group Says Mujahidin, Army Elements Staged Attack

MM1602164995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Feb 95 p 1

[Report by Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "The Attack in the Marshes in Southern Iraq Targeted Mojahedin-e Khalq Base"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—Informed sources in Damascus and Tehran have told AL-HAYAH that the fighting last Saturday [11 February] and Sunday in southern Iraq broke out after an attack, "in which a large number of Iranian military personnel participated," on a Mojahedin-e Khalq base. The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] denied that Iranians were captured by the Iraqi Army, "because the attack was carried out by Iraqi forces from the mujahidin and from within the Iraqi Army inside Iraq."

The sources said that the target of the attack was a base of the Mojahedin-e Khalq organization, which is opposed to the Iranian regime, in the area of al-Baydah in Hawr al-Saradihiyah inside Iraq along the border with Iran. They added that the attackers "engaged in fierce fighting with the Mojahedin-e Khalq forces and forces of the Iraqi Army corps in that area."

They said that the fighting lasted 36 hours and ended with the retreat of the attacking forces into Iranian territory, having suffered a large number of casualties. Quoting sources at al-'Amarah Hospital in southern Iraq, they said that 10 dead and 40 wounded members of the Iraqi forces were admitted to the hospital. [passage omitted]

SAIRI did not directly claim responsibility for the attack in southern Iraq. It issued a clarification, a copy of which was received by AL-HAYAH, saying: "Why did the (Iraqi) regime impose a blackout on news of these operations, which occurred three days before the (Iraqi) statement was issued? Was the ministry not aware of the situation or were there serious matters that required forgery and deception?"

SAIRI accused Baghdad of massing two corps as well as artillery and armored battalions in the south, adding that "blaming Iran, Kuwait, the United States, and others is a known past and present policy of the regime, whose aim is to export internal problems abroad...because the regime, before anyone else, knows that the Iranian-Iraqi borders are tightly sealed off by the Iranian Army on Iran's side and by the Iraqi Army on the Iraqi side. The regime had also built sand barriers and opened exclusion canals and waterways which have been there since the war and to this day. So how could a large force have crossed the border, as the regime claimed?" [passage omitted]

Kuwaiti Paper Reports Arrests of Air Force Officers

JN1602180095 Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 9 Feb 95 pp 1, 14

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran—AL-WATAN—Confirmed reports have said the Iraqi regime last month dismissed a large number of Air Force officers and arrested many of them. The Iraqi regime, according to these reports, dismissed 68 high-ranking officers, including Colonel Zahid Salih, Colonel Azhar Tahir, and Major Jawad Muhsin Muhammad. Those are the commanders of the air bases in Mosul, Karkuk, and al-Kut.

It is noteworthy that, last month, tyrant Saddam was the target of an assassination attempt carried out by a number of Iraqi pilots led by Air Force Lieutenant General Muhammad Mazlum al-Dulaymi, who together with 14 of his comrades were brutally killed.

In Mosul, the governor summoned the chieftains of the Kurdish tribes and communicated to them the unjust decision taken by the so- called Revolution Command Council which calls for displacing some Kurdish tribes to southern Iraq. According to reports coming from Mosul, the tribal chieftains told the governor that they will remain on their lands and in their villages, that they will defend them, and that they will not agree to the displacement decision which aims at changing and Arabizing the demographic map of Mosul.

KDP Role in 'Conspiratorial Scheme' Seen

NC1602212895 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1615 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] information organs every day give evidence and proof of the traitorous Barzani leadership's complicity in the conspiratorial scheme aimed at harming the democratic experiment in Kurdistan, an experiment represented in the parliament and government of the region of Kurdistan. We have repeatedly exposed the reasons why the center of decisionmaking in the Barzani leadership, led by Mas'ud Barzani, persists in fomenting sedition and kindling internecine fighting to destroy the gains our people made during the uprising of 1991. It seeks to return to the lap of the dictatorship in Baghdad after weakening the PUK and expelling it from the arena. We also said that this plot is being concocted by more than one party, which, regrettably, uses the Barzani leadership as a tool. We also mentioned the magnitude of cooperation and coordination between the Barzani leadership and the dictatorial regime in Baghdad, notably the visit to Mosul by Azaz al-Barwari, a Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] Central Committee member, on 1 January 1995 and a meeting with senior officials of Saddam's leadership. In the areas under its influence, the Barzani leadership received trucks loaded with shipments of arms and ammunition, which arrived from Mosul on the night of 2 January.

As time goes by events prove beyond any doubt the Barzani leadership's involvement in this conspiratorial scheme against the Kurdish people, their gains, and democratic experiment. Events prove everything the PUK has said about the real reasons for this fighting and the magnitude of the plot against the people. The plot will fail, God willing, thanks to our people's steadfastness and the PUK forces' bravery.

The PUK media have been clear and candid with the Kurdish masses since the fighting erupted. We were convinced as to why Barzani and his leadership refused to agree to dialogue and peace. We were also aware of the reasons for the Barzani leadership's hostility to the parliament and government of the region of Kurdistan and its continuing efforts to abort this experiment. We noted how quickly the Barzani leadership rushed to the lap of the enemies of our people and received arms, aid, and funds from any foreign party hostile to the democratic experiment in Kurdistan. [passage omitted]

The scale of cooperation and coordination between the Barzani leadership and the Iraqi regime is now well known and is not a topic of propaganda or instigation by the PUK. The suspicious mercenary relationship has been reported in the foreign press and radios. The Barzani leadership cannot deny this relationship. The revelation of the conspiratorial and mercenary link between the Barzani leadership and the dictatorship in Baghdad places a national and historical responsibility before all the Kurdish political parties, the Iraqi Unified National Congress, and the Kurdish masses to foil this scheme and isolate the Barzani leadership on every level, that is, the popular and international levels and the level of the Kurdish and Iraqi parties. This scheme aims to offer Kurdistan as an easy morsel to the dictatorship in Baghdad and to end the Kurdish people's demands for federalism, parliament, and regional government. This scheme is the greatest danger facing the Kurdish cause and our people's gains and struggle. This scheme is similar to the general collapse of the Barzani leadership in 1975.

We would like to emphasize the following points:

1. Through its involvement in this scheme, the Barzani leadership and Barzani himself bear the responsibility for shedding Kurdish blood and for the continuing suffering and starvation of the Kurdish masses through the plundering of customs revenue on the border points and the imposition of the economic blockade on three governorates in Kurdistan.

2. Our people's sacrifices are facing serious dangers and the Barzani leadership alone bears the responsibility before the people and history for the loss of the democratic experiment in Kurdistan, the gains made in the 1991 uprising, and the blood of the Kurdish liberation movement's martyrs.

3. The PUK, all authentic national parties, the masses, and all honest and loyal Kurdish people will stand in line as an impregnable wall in the face of this suspicious conspiratorial scheme now that the plot has been exposed to everyone. This conspiratorial onslaught will fail like every plot hatched against the Kurdish people by the Barzani leadership and the Iraqi dictatorial regime.

4. All sincere members, cadres, and peshmerga in the KDP must reconsider their stance on the ongoing fighting in Kurdistan, especially now that everyone knows that the Barzani leadership is involved in a conspiratorial scheme against the parliament and government of Kurdistan and that the dictatorial Iraqi regime uses this leadership as a tool to implement its plans and policy, which are hostile to the Kurdish people and their achievements. National duty calls on all sincere people to enhance their cohesion and rally round the PUK's policy and course. The PUK now holds proudly the banner of defending the Kurdish people's interests and achievements.

UN Ambassador Comments on Kurdish Fighting

JN1602145495 Baghdad INA in English 1000 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Washington, 16 Feb (INA)—Iraq's Ambassador to the United Nations Nizar

Hamdun confirmed that the presence of foreign forces in the north of the country did not bring security nor "provide comfort."

In a reply published by THE WASHINGTON POST daily on Wednesday, Mr Hamdun said that the lack of the Iraqi Government control over the north for the last four years has led to nothing less than a mini-civil war between different Kurdish factions.

Regarding the situation in the south and false stories on the Iraqi Government's policy in the marshes, the Iraqi U.N. ambassador said that the projects in the marshlands were suggested in October 1952 by American experts, namely, Fred Locker and James Keger and Knappen-Tippetts-Abbett-Mccarthy, engineers, a consultant firm in the field of water resources.

Mr Hamdun further said that the suggestions and later the implementation of the projects in their current stages are aimed at modernizing ways of life, enhancing agricultural productivity as well as the environment in the south of the country.

Mr Hamdun stressed that the U.S. "dual containment" policy, which practically translates into weakening of Iraq, is a short- sighted policy.

PUK Radio: Barzani Artillery Pounds Complex Near Irbil

NC1602173695 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1530 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1720 the day before yesterday, the artillery of the capitulationist [Kurdistan Democratic] Party leadership pounded the (Ibn Talawah) complex near the city of Irbil. The bestial shelling lasted 30 minutes and killed Wali Muhammad Sulayman, 65, a displaced citizen from Karkuk, and injured three others.

PUK Claims KDP, Hezbollah Fail To Capture Rawandoz

LD1602205395 Tehran IRNA in English 2031 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj (Kurdistan Prov.), Feb. 16, IRNA—Almost a year after the outbreak of bloody clashes between Iraq's Kurdistan's Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) the fighting is drawn to the city of Rawandoz.

Forces loyal to Jalal Talebani claim that PUK has repulsed the joint military action of KDP and Iraqi hezbollah to capture the city of Rawandoz.

However, a source close to KDP led by Masud Barezani contacted by IRNA rejected the PUK claim.

PUK radio monitored here said the joint forces of KDP and hezbollah launched an offensive to seize Rawandoz in Irbil Province, but, were forced to retreat suffering hundreds of casualties.

The radio did not specify the number of casualties but said the bodies of 200 of the joint forces were left around the city.

It claimed that this was the second offensive by the KDP and hezbollah and that PUK seized hundreds of light and semi-heavy weapons and some vehicles from the enemy.

The PUK claim could not be independently confirmed.

The mountainous city of Rawandoz located in the road between Haj Umran to Irbil has been under control of PUK since the escalation of the new round of fighting between the belligerent parties in northern Iraq.

Paper Reports on 'Thefts' by Kurdish Warring Factions

JN1402165095 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 4 Feb 95 pp 1,6

[Unattributed follow-up report: "The Agents Hang Their Dirty Linen"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The continuous clashes between agent gangs in the Kudistan Autonomous Region have not only exposed each gang and its espionage for its masters, but also the many crimes and facts which they and their masters have been hiding in the past. This time, the crimes and facts have been revealed by the news media of the traitors themselves. For more than one month now, these media have been hanging their dirty linen, revealing how hostile they are to our Kurdish people by the crimes they commit against the citizens and the thefts they carry out. All of them have now become thieves, not just the agent al-Jalabi. It seems that al-Jalabi's presence in the autonomous region, as directed by the Americans, and his appointment as "opposition leader" and main motivator, as he is now viewed in Kurdish areas, has encouraged others to engage in open burglary.

Agent Jalal says that Mas'ud [Barzani] and the leaders of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan are thieves. For more than one month now he has been exploiting the information he has about their thefts. Meanwhile, Mas'ud's nephew, Nijarvan, also appeared on Irbil television with details about robberies which agent Jalal [Talabani] and his collaborators have carried out in banks and government departments.

Thus, citizens have begun these days relating stories about thefts which are being carried out by orders from "Jalal the thief," including the theft which was carried out by armed gangs which are directly linked to the headquarters of agent Jalal on 27 January 1995 in Irbil. These gangs entered a clinic belonging to Dr. Khayri 'Umar and plundered its contents, including furniture, money, and medicines in front of bystanders, who watched what was going on because it is similar to hundreds of incidents taking place daily.

The thefts take place under the direct orders of agent Jalal on the basis that they are part of a military plan to weaken Mas'ud's gang. So, Jalal is stealing all he can, before agent Mas'ud beats him to it, in order to continue the fighting. Under this plan, Jalal has packed five trucks with furniture from the Irbil Labor Department and transported it to al-Sulaymaniyah. When a citizen in the area where the department is located asked one of the armed gang about the reason for transporting the furniture and equipment, the answer was: We will sell them and use the funds to fight the criminal followers of Mas'ud.

Thus, the agents are not ashamed to steal the property of the citizens, mosques, and government departments in front of bystanders and to justify that by saying that it is essential for the fighting. At the same time, the news media of the two agent gangs have begun calling on each other's followers to join their bases, or to use their words, "join the ranks of the people." They do not know that all traitors are enemies of the people regardless of their assumed names and associations, because whoever betrays the homeland cannot but be in the camp of the enemies of the people.

Iran's Rafsanjani Urged To Stop 'Torture' of Iraqi Refugees

MM1602144995 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Feb 95 p 2

[Report by 'Adnan Husayn: "Iraqi Opposition Sources Accuse Iran of Torturing Arrested Refugees"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—Iraqi opposition sources in London have stressed that Iranian security services are still holding and interrogating Iraqis living in Iran. They were arrested last month on charges of participating and inciting demonstrations organized by Iraqis in protest at the Iranian authorities' mistreatment of Iraqi refugees and evacuees, whose number is estimated at about 1 million.

The sources, which have links with Islamic opposition movements some of which enjoy the support of the present Iranian regime, said that scores of detainees are being subjected to physical and mental torture in the detention centers of the Iranian Security Ministry "Itla'at" in Tehran and Qom. The aim is to determine whether a secret organization was behind the sit-ins and demonstrations staged in Qom on 25 and 26 January in protest at the Iranian authorities' continued refusal to grant Iraqi refugees and evacuees work permits, in addition to denying them the right to marriage, education, and free movement in Iran, and the right to travel abroad. [passage omitted]

The leader of an Iraqi opposition group has appealed to Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani to intervene to solve the problems experienced by Iraqi refugees and evacuees in Iran.

In a letter to Rafsanjani, in which he cited the protest actions that occurred in Qom last month, Sa'd Salih Jabr, chairman of the "Free Iraqi Council," a London-based opposition group, called on the Iranian president "to intervene personally to end the tragic situation from which our brother Iraqi refugees are suffering."

Islamic States Urged To Help Release Assets for Pilgrims

JN1602161495 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1245 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 16 Feb (INA)—Iraq has urged Islamic states and well-intentioned forces in the world to work seriously to release $25 million of its frozen assets held in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates [UAE] to cover the expenses required for the next pilgrimage season and to facilitate the performance of pilgrimage by Iraqi pilgrims.

This call by Iraq to release part of its assets comes against the background of the difficulties faced by Iraqis who seek to perform the pilgrimage this year as a result of the continued enforcement of the unfair sanctions clamped on our mujahid people. These have reduced the number of Iraqi pilgrims from 19,000 in 1990 to 524 in 1994.

Prior to the treacherous 30-state anti-Iraq aggression, Iraq sent 19,000 pilgrims to holy Mecca in accordance with the quota system endorsed by the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO], which stipulates that for each one million people in each ICO member, 1,000 are allowed to seek pilgrimage to Mecca.

Since 1991, Iraq has asked the United Nations, the UN Security Council, and world organizations and humanitarian bodies to allow Iraqi civilian aircraft to transport Iraqi pilgrims to holy Mecca for the purpose of performing the pilgrimage.

The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs has abandoned the sponsorship of Iraqi pilgrim convoys due to the continued enforcement of the unfair sanctions clamped on our mujahid people, and also due to the acute dearth of foreign currency, which the state used to provide to pilgrims. Privately-owned companies have been formed to transport pilgrims to holy Mecca. These companies charge citizens high and unaffordable fares. This has reduced the number of pilgrims. Thus, their number has trickled to several hundred each year. Since 1991, Saudi authorities have demanded that Iraqis pay the fares of pilgrim group leaders in the 'Ar'ar area on the Iraqi-Saudi borders, contrary to the normal practice before the onset of the treacherous 30-state anti-Iraq aggression. These fares now total 445 Saudi riyals to be paid by each and every pilgrim.

Over the past few years, and in the course of their pilgrimage activities, Iraqi pilgrims have experienced harassment, something that runs counter to the allegations made by the Saudi authorities regarding their professed eagerness to treat God's guests well and hospitably.

Iraqi pilgrims have experienced a host of provocative measures, including holding them on the Iraqi-Saudi borders in 'Ar'ar and denying them access to food and drink on the pretext that their identities had to be examined. Moreover, the pilgrims were repeatedly harassed while they were on their way to al-Mish'ar al-Haram [in Mecca]. The objective of this harassment was to hurt and terrorize them.

Moreover, the pilgrims were held in the heart of the desert away from holy Medina for several days for no sensible reason whatsoever. They were held in camps that lack the most basic means of comfort. This caused many of them to suffer from sunstroke. Additionally, Saudi authorities confiscated the funds of several transport officials and pilgrimage agents.

During the last session it held under His Excellency President Saddam Husayn, the Council of Ministers discussed the difficulties facing Iraqi pilgrims this year as a result of the unfair sanctions clamped on Iraq. It asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to submit official requests to the United Nations, the Arab League, and the ICO, asking them to act to release $25 million from Iraq's frozen assets held in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE in order to provide the requirements needed by Iraqi pilgrims and facilitate their performance of pilgrimage this year. Part of this amount will be used by Iraqi authorities to promote the pilgrims' travel procedures. In case these requests are turned down, the promotion of such procedures will bear down heavily upon the foreign currency currently available on the Iraqi market, and this will increase the prices of food supplies and consumer goods and hurt Iraqis.

Minister Returns After Visit to Sudan, Libya, Tunisia

JN1402163795 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1440 GMT 14 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 14 Feb (INA)—Latif Nusayyif Jasim, President Saddam Husayn's personal envoy and minister of labor and social affairs, returned to Baghdad today following a visit to Sudan, Libya, and Tunisia.

During the visit, the president's envoy conveyed messages from his excellency the president to the leaders of Sudan, Libya, and Tunisia. The messages deal with the latest developments of the relationship between Iraq and the UN Security Council and relations between Arab countries in general. The messages also deal with the situation in the Arab region.

BABIL Reports Arrest of WTC Bombing Suspect

JN1602150395 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 11 Feb 95 p 2

[BABIL headline: "The New Lie" from the "Foreign Agency Reports" page]

[FBIS Translated Text] Islamabad, ... A Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman said Thursday [9 February] that Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, one of the main suspects in the attack on the World Trade Center [WTC] in New York in 1993, was found in possession of Iraqi identification documents the moment he was arrested in Pakistan.

The spokesman added: Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf was arrested a few days ago in Islamabad. According to U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, 27, was arrested last Tuesday [7 February] by Pakistani authorities before he was handed over to U.S. authorities. In May 1993, the Pakistani Government received an arrest warrant issued by the Interpol against Ramzi Yusuf, whose name was on the red list of the Interpol, according to the spokesman.

The spokesman added that he did not know from where Yusuf arrived, how he entered Pakistani territory, or whether he is really an Iraqi as his papers say.

At a news conference, the spokesman said: Many foreigners came to Pakistan during the jihad in Afghanistan. We do not know if he personally participated in the jihad. The spokesman did not have information about how the Pakistani authorities arrested Ramzi Yusuf.

UK Representatives Arrive, Prepare for Businessmen's Visit

JN1402144395 Baghdad INA in English 1356 GMT 14 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 14, INA—General coordinator of the Iraqi-British Interests Group Lomond Skyes [name as received] arrived here on Monday night on a visit aimed at making preparations for the British businessmen visit which will start on Friday.

Mr. Skyes is accompanied by director-general of the United Project Food Company Karam Dorti [name as received], the company used to have trade deals with Iraq in the past.

The British businessmen delegation will comprise representatives from 27 companies specialised in sewerage and water projects, foodstuff, medicine and medical appliances trading.

The Iraqi-British Interests Group was set up over two years ago by a group of British businessmen with the aim of boosting trade exchange with Iraq.

Peres, Egypt's Musa To Work on Lowering Tension

Peres Considering New Gesture

TA1702095995 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 17 Feb 95 pp A1, A10

[Report by Aluf Ben and Gay Bekhor]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres will meet in Paris today with his Egyptian counterpart 'Amr Musa in an attempt to lower the high level of tension between Egypt and Israel which has developed over the nuclear issue. Peres might offer Musa a new Israeli gesture in the nuclear field.

The exchange of declarations between the two countries sharpened yesterday when Egyptian President Husni Mubarak attacked Israel at a news conference in Cairo. [passage omitted]

The United States called on Israel this week to make further unilateral gestures in the nuclear field in order to reach a compromise with Egypt so as to prevent further escalation in the dispute. Senior U.S. official Robert Gallucci, who visited Israel, transmitted a message in that vein to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin.

The prime minister will hold a discussion in his office this morning prior to the foreign minister's departure for his meeting with Musa. Defense Ministry Director General David 'Ivri and Foreign Ministry Director General Eytan Bentzur are participating in the meeting. It seems that Peres will ask for Rabin's permission to make an additional gesture toward Egypt.

The Foreign Ministry yesterday held deliberations in an attempt to work out a new gesture toward Egypt while sticking to the Israeli policy which is opposed to the signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Under the proposal being discussed Israel will agree to open practical discussions on a Middle East demilitarized of weapons of mass destruction within the framework of the multilateral arms control talks. Egypt has been demanding for some time the setting up of a team of experts to formulate practical proposals to demilitarize the region of nuclear weapons, but Israel has so far opposed the idea. [passage omitted]

There is opposition to additional gestures toward Egypt among the senior professional echelon dealing with arms control due to an assessment that Egypt will reject them as insufficient and Israel will then be drawn into superfluous concessions. In early February, Peres proposed to the Egyptians to open a bilateral dialogue in the nuclear field and to start an exchange of visits by nuclear scientists from 'Ayn Shams and Nahal Soreq. The Egyptians responded by saying that they want to visit the Dimona reactor. In this morning's discussions in Rabin's office, there will be a reevaluation of the proposal to exchange scientists and the Egyptian reaction.

Political sources yesterday expressed concern about the developing confrontation between the United States and Egypt over Egypt's refusal to support the NPT's extension and its demand that Israel first join the treaty. [passage omitted]

Reports have reached Israel about the tough talks senior U.S. Administration officials held with Musa in Washington early in the week. Musa said in Washington this week that Egypt is demanding that Israel open up its nuclear facilities to international inspection and that it will not support the extension of the NPT for an undefined period, as the United States has been demanding. [passage omitted]

Peres Leaves for Paris

TA1702114595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres has left for Paris, where he will meet his Egyptian counterpart, 'Amr Musa, in an attempt to dispel the tension between Egypt and Israel over the nuclear issue. It is unclear whether Israel will propose any goodwill gestures on this matter without deviating from its opposition to signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 17 February adds that "according to a report that reached our desk just this minute from Paris, the Egyptians are not interested in holding a meeting between their foreign minister and Foreign Minister Peres, who is currently on his way to Paris." Correspondent Eldad Beck notes that "according to information just received, there will be no meeting this weekend between Shim'on Peres and 'Amr Musa, who will be participating in a seminar on the future of the Middle East following a comprehensive peace agreement." The report states that "efforts are still under way to arrange some sort of meeting between the two men to resolve tensions between Egypt and Israel, but the chances of this currently appear slim."]

Former UN Envoy: No Surprise in Musa's 'Insensitivity'

TA1702073995 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 13 Feb 95 p 6

[Commentary by Yehuda Z. Blum, former ambassador to the United Nations and a professor of international law at Jerusalem's Hebrew University: "Behind the Symbolism"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The personality of a foreign minister is usually considered an indicator of a country's foreign policy.

This was the case in Israel in 1955, when Golda Meir replaced Moshe Sharet. Likewise, Moshe Dayan's surprise appointment by Menahem Begin in 1977 was an early indication of the course he intended to pursue.

When Stalin sought rapprochement with Nazi Germany in 1939, he replaced his "pro-Western" Commissar for Foreign Affairs Maxim Litvinov (alias Meir Moisevitch Wallah) with Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich Molotov, who in August 1939 signed the infamous nonaggression pact with Germany's Ribbentrop.

In Egypt for the past decade or so, first 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid and then 'Amr Musa have served as clear signposts of President Mubarak's general course vis-a-vis Israel. Long before becoming foreign ministers, both were known as skeptics, if not outright opponents, of the Israel-Egypt peace process.

In December 1977 in Ismailia, it was 'Abd-al-Majid—at that time Egypt's ambassador to the UN—who thwarted a deal between Begin and Anwar al-Sadat which, in essence, was then concluded after many ups and downs at Camp David some nine months later. (Significantly, 'Abd-al-Majid was absent from Camp David.)

Even after the conclusion of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty in March 1979, 'Abd-al-Majid continued to keep his distance from Israel and Israelis. On occasion, together with his deputy 'Amr Musa, he would descend to the level of personal discourtesy, to the consternation of incredulous Western diplomats.

In private conversation with Israeli colleagues, Egyptian diplomats described 'Abd-al-Majid and Musa as "rejectionists" with regard to Israel.

When 'Abd-al-Majid was appointed secretary-general of the Arab League, he showed his true colors by returning, unopened, a congratulatory letter sent to him by then foreign minister David Levi.

'Amr Musa's anti-Israel activities—his insulting "non-visit" to Yad Vashem last fall, his vigorous campaign against Israel on the nuclear non-proliferation issue, and his efforts to get African and Gulf states to halt or at least slow down establishing ties with Israel, should come as no surprise.

This latter initiative is certainly curious, for over the years Egypt has presented itself to Israel and the U.S.—quite plausibly—as a bridge between Israel and the Arab-African world.

But even those familiar with Musa's outlook must have noted with some astonishment his most recent discovery (revealed to THE NEW YORK TIMES) that the blame for the recent spate of terrorist atrocities against Israel lay... with Israel, because of the delay in the conclusion of the Israel-PLO interim agreement.

It apparently hasn't occurred to Musa that Gaza (and to a lesser extend Jericho), turned since last May into safe havens for Palestinian terrorism, must make Israel extremely wary of exposing its major population centers—and the whole country—to terrorists operating with impunity from these places bordering on its population centers.

Is Musa equally unaware of domestic terrorism in Egypt?

Unfortunately, he isn't alone in his insensitivity toward Israel. His close rival is Usamah al-Baz, a central Egyptian foreign policy maker believed to be much closer to Mubarak than Musa himself. A member of Sadat's entourage, al-Baz was known as a staunch member of the "rejectionist" camp. However, his influence has grown considerably under Mubarak.

As long as Musa and al-Baz occupy center stage in Egyptian foreign policy, this must serve to indicate a continuing course of "containing" Israel and "reducing Israel to its natural size"—even though for tactical reasons it may occasionally be concealed by moves that are largely symbolic or cosmetic, and by media extravaganzas.

Rabin, Peres Briefed by U.S.'s Gallucci on Nuclear Issues

TA1602121295 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 16 Feb 95 p A2

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The United States has demanded that the DPRK put a total halt to exports of missiles and missile technologies to the Middle East and will pursue the issue in the bilateral talks on a political arrangement. Ambassador Robert Gallucci, head of the U.S. delegation to the talks with North Korea, said that the United States will apparently make normalization with North Korea conditional on its stopping missile exports.

Gallucci spent two days in Israel, during which he conferred with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. He said that DPRK officials have consented in principle to discuss the missile issue with the Americans, but that no progress has yet been made. [passage omitted]

Gallucci visited Israel as part of an extensive tour of several countries to brief them on the agreement reached in Geneva that stipulates that North Korea will curb its nuclear program in exchange for the construction of new electricity-producing nuclear reactors and the supply of oil in the interim period until the reactors are completed.

Gallucci briefed Rabin and Peres on the progress made in the contacts concerning the implementation of the agreement. He also met with defense establishment officials.

Peres Attacks al-Asad Remarks on Rabin 'Weakness'

TA1602131995 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Before leaving for the meeting with Yasir 'Arafat, Peres addressed the Syrian track. He attacked Syrian President

Hafiz al-Asad who said that because of his political weakness, Yitzhaq Rabin cannot afford to make important decisions to attain an arrangement with Syria. Peres harshly attacks the Syrian president:

[Begin Peres recording] I reject the arguments that he is making. He is not to judge Israel just as we do not judge Syria. This weak and poor Israel conducted three different sets of negotiations that have ended successfully, more or less. He should learn how to start negotiations and how to conduct them. [end recording]

Foreign Minister Peres said that no negotiations are taking place at this time between Jerusalem and Damascus.

Senior Analysts View al-Asad's Stance on Peace

TA1602131495 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
16 Feb 95 p A3

[Report by Aluf Ben and 'Aqiva Eldar]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Briefing yesterday's cabinet session, senior analysts said that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad now feels "he has time," which is why he has halted the talks with Israel.

The analysts said that al-Asad feels that time is on his side and is not sure that Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin is politically capable of reaching a peace agreement with Syria and having it approved in a referendum. Some Syrians are of the opinion that "it makes no difference with whom we negotiate," the analysts noted, and that al-Asad believes that the U.S. Administration has grown weak, particularly in the wake of the Republicans' victory in Congress.

Based on these assessments, the analysts believe that al-Asad chose to show caution and slow down the pace of the negotiations with Israel while pressuring the U.S. Administration to take a more active stance.

The ministers were told that the Syrians are disappointed with the results of the meeting held about two months ago in Washington between Ehud Baraq and Hikmat al-Shihabi, the Israeli and Syrian chiefs of staff. According to the analysts, "no chemistry" emerged between the officers, and the Syrians have signaled their wish to meet the new chief of staff, Amnon Shahaq.

The senior analysts reiterated what they have said many times in the past that al-Asad has not reneged on peace as his choice in principle, but continues to insist on his basic demand in the negotiations: a full withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders.

Participants walked out of the cabinet session with the impression that at this point the negotiations with Syria are totally frozen. [passage omitted]

Palestinians Taking 'More Serious' Action on Security

TA1602110395 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
16 Feb 95 p A1

[Report by political correspondent Aluf Ben and 'Amira Hess]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Security officials yesterday told the cabinet that the Palestinian authorities were undoubtedly taking more serious action than in the past on foiling terrorist attacks and hindering the activity of radical elements; however, the officials stated that "this was still far short of meeting our demands." The officials asserted that "it is still impossible to know whether or not these measures are merely ad hoc steps taken to mollify us and ease Israeli pressure, with the situation reverting back to its previous state within a short time."

The officials noted that several arrested activists belonging to the radical organizations in the Gaza Strip had been released on 14 February. Yesterday, some political activists from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine were also released after a week-long detention.

Nevertheless, the Palestinian Police yesterday began arresting Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists from Gaza's Sabra neighborhood. A senior Palestinian security official said that the Palestinian Police had arrested a Hamas activist in the Gaza Strip who was planning a suicide attack in Israel. The arrested man, 31-year-old 'Adil Hazayq, had planned to carry out a suicide operation with two accomplices. [passage omitted]

King Husayn Denounces Violence in Islam's Name

JN1502154395 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 15 Feb 95

[Report by Randah Habib in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian monarch, King Husayn, has said it is the duty of every Muslim to distance himself from those who tarnish the image of Islam. The king was alluding to armed Islamic groups that adopt violence.

In a meeting with foreign media representatives in Jordan, the king denounced Islamic groups that adopt violence in the name of Islam. He said: We are all Muslims and Islam is us. We strongly denounce the tarnishing of the image of Islam in the world by these practices.

King Husayn said: There is the camp of peace, comprehensive peace that bears the seeds of hope; and the camp of those who want to destroy the peace camp.

On the number of those opposing peace in his country, Husayn noted that the majority of the Jordanian people want peace and are continuing work to entrench it, adding that the National Charter emphasizes respect for the views of the majority—views the minority should comply with. The king reiterated his country's commitment to reaching a comprehensive peace in the region, pointing out that there is no other alternative to peace except further misery and hopelessness.

King Husayn expressed concern about developments on the Palestinian-Israeli track and hoped that everything will be done to overcome obstacles preventing progress on this track. King Husayn said he was prepared to extend all possible assistance to the Palestinians if they ask for it. However, the king said Jordan is determined not to interfere in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

King Husayn also expressed his hope that progress will be realized on the Syrian and Israeli tracks because the goal is comprehensive peace in the region.

Israeli Goods To Attract 'High' Customs Duties

MM1602153195 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Feb 95 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Jordanian Official Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: High Customs Duties To Be Imposed on Israeli Goods"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Jordan has announced that it fears that Israel might overrun its economy, and thus it has decided to enforce restrictions to avoid this. And it intends to set high customs duties to prevent its (Israeli) goods coming onto its territory.

This came in a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday by Dr. Muhammad al-Samadi, head of the Jordanian side in the joint Jordanian-Israeli economic committee and director general of the Industry and Trade Ministry.

Al-Samadi said that the committee needs more time to discuss the commodities to be exempted from customs duty between the two sides, and to agree on the broad outlines of the trade agreement expected to be concluded between Jordan and Israel. [passage omitted]

Al-Samadi added that Jordan is keen to protect its economy and to avoid Israeli competition. It is also keen to protect its industrial and agricultural products through restrictions to prevent the presence of similar Israeli commodities on the Jordanian market. He indicated that high customs duties would be imposed on these commodities to prevent or reduce the demand for them. He pointed out that the Jordanian economy should be protected in order to prevent it from being swallowed up by the strong Israeli economy.

He pointed to the strength of the Israeli economy compared with the Jordanian economy. He said that Jordan's budget is $1.5 billion, while Israel's is over $50 billion. And the Israeli economy is 20 times the size of the Jordanian economy—which poses a direct threat to the Jordanian economy's mechanism and various activities.

He pointed to the two sides' eagerness to reach an agreement on a list of the commodities which they are allowed to export to one another without paying any customs.

Minutes of Agricultural Talks With Palestinians Signed

JN1602211495 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The minutes of Jordanian-Palestinian talks in the agricultural field were signed at the Ministry of Agriculture in Amman today. They contain an agreement to exchange agricultural goods between the two sides according to each side's needs, as well as an agreement to form subcommittees for technical cooperation. [passage omitted]

Iranian Envoy Emphasizes 'Depth' of Ties

JN1402175695 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 14 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Dastmalchian, ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Amman, has emphasized the depth of relations between Jordan and Iran.

In an interview with the Jordanian News Agency on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of Iran's national day, he said contacts between Jordan and Iran continue on the levels of leadership, government, and the private sector in the two fraternal countries, which are connected by an Islamic civilization of the same roots that go back to the honorable prophet's family.

He said Jordanian-Iranian relations are daily developing on the basis of mutual respect, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, and strengthening economic and cultural relations, in addition to the exchange of visits of delegations and setting up trade fairs.

The Iranian ambassador said Iran is studying the possibility of sending an official delegation to Amman for consultations and coordination with the Jordanian Government on signing a number of bilateral agreements that had been initialed.

He said his country's government is eager to realize peace and stability in the region and to eliminate tension in the Middle East, central Asia, and the Caucasus on the basis of the UN Charter and international laws and resolutions.

Minister Cited on Sudan, Libya, Tunisia Visits

JN1402121695 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1110 GMT 14 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 14 Feb (INA)—Latif Nusayyif Jasim, personal envoy of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn and minister of labor and social affairs, has described his meetings with Sudanese, Libyan, and Tunisian leaders as positive. He commended the hospitality accorded to him in their countries, as well as the full understanding they expressed for the relationship between Iraq and the UN Security Council [UNSC].

In a statement to the Iraqi News Agency correspondent in Amman, Jasim added that he explained the nature of the relationship between Iraq and the UNSC to Sudanese President 'Umar Ahmad al-Bashir, Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, and Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. He also briefed them on the U.S. Administration's unlawful and unfair interpretations of the UNSC resolutions.

Jasim went on to say that he explained to these Arab leaders in detail Iraq's fulfillment of all its commitments as enshrined in the UNSC resolutions, although they are unfair and arbitrary, whereas the UNSC has failed to honor any of its commitments toward Iraq, particularly those regarding the lifting of the sanctions clamped on it for over four years, the implementation of Paragraph 22 [of UNSC Resolution 687], which allows Iraq to export its oil, the release of its frozen assets, and the resumption of its political role on the international scene.

Jasim noted that he reviewed with these Arab heads of state the improvement that has taken place in the stands of France, Russia, the PRC, and some Arab states, as manifested in the positive and favorable statements made by their officials.

Jasim also asserted that the Arab leaders reiterated their understanding of and sympathy with the Iraqi people's plight. They supported an end to the sanctions, particularly since Iraq has fulfilled its commitments, Jasim noted.

Foreign Minister Meets UN Secretary General

JN1602160195 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 0920 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 16 Feb (PETRA)—UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali met yesterday with [Jordanian] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. 'Adnan Abu-'Awdah, Jordan's permanent UN representative, also attended the meeting.

The meeting dealt with the issue of transferring the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency [UNRWA] from Vienna to Gaza. Al-Kabariti voiced his concern that the services extended by the UNRWA will suffer due to this transfer. He wished that these services will continue to be extended.

He also voiced concern that this transfer will cause the UNRWA to restrict its services to refugees in Gaza only and to withhold them from Palestinian refugees in Arab states.

Talks also dealt with the Jordanian role in the UN international peace-keeping forces, the withdrawal of international forces from Croatia, and the UN Rapid Deployment Force program, which Jordan was one of the first countries to join.

Al-Kabariti and Dr. Ghali discussed increasing Jordan's share of posts in the United Nations and its bodies. He also stressed the need to have the post of UN Development Program director filled by an Arab candidate.

Columnist Views Claes' Comments on Islam

JN1502080395 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 14 Feb 95 p 6

[From the "The View From Fourth Circle" column: "Religion, NATO, and the Lands of Chaos" by Rami G. Khouri]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In case you missed the news, you should know that late last week the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) declared war—more or less—on Islam. A meeting of NATO ambassadors decided to launch a dialogue with five North African Arab states in order to develop a joint strategy to combat "the security threat posed by Islamic fundamentalism," in the words of THE WASHINGTON POST report.

This move comes after several years of concern in Europe that political instability and economic stagnation along its southern rim pose a greater threat to Europe in the long term than events in the former Soviet Union. NATO Secretary General Willy Claes told a security conference in Germany last weekend that ever since the Cold War ended, "Islamic militancy has emerged as perhaps the single gravest threat to the NATO alliance and to Western security," according to THE WASHINGTON POST.

Pretty heavy stuff, but also pretty far off the mark. Europe is not worried per se about "political instability," or mass suffering or dying throughout the Mediterranean Basin. What NATO really fears in the Mediterranean Basin—and give them credit for being honest about it—is mass Arab/Islamic emigration to Europe. It is the same fear that prompted the United States to invade Haiti last year.

Since the end of the Cold War, we have heard assorted theories and frameworks that seek to give order to the new global political forces. Among the most popular are: That nationalistic warfare based on ethnic and religious identities could become more common throughout the world, and that the predominantly Christian West could find itself in an increasingly grave confrontation with Islam, or the Islamic World, or Militant Muslims, or Muslim rage, or something else along those lines that is equally vague and simplistic.

As we witness the gradual fulfillment of this prophecy, we should also be challenged to better come to terms with the real nature of the confrontation that now, in round one, pits NATO against the activist Islamism of the Mediterranean Basin. It is too simplistic and easy to call this a West-Islam conflict, much as this appeals to the intellectual circus-masters in some parts of the United States and Western Europe. The problem that militant Islamism expresses is much deeper, and far older. That greater problem is hinted at but not fully grasped by some in the West. THE ECONOMIST magazine in early January said that the only major threats to the West in the near future could come from a stronger Russia, a more hostile China, or if "somebody organises an expansionary Islamic power out of the present chaos between Iran and Morocco."

Well thank you, guv, I feel much better knowing that what ails me is that I am part of "the present chaos between Iran and Morocco." (In fact, the "chaos" extends well beyond Iran and Morocco, especially to regions that Great Britain once colonised, but let's leave that for later). The relevant point is that we are now seeing the cultural, intellectual and geo-political outlines of an increasingly worried and more overtly racist Western perception of events in much of the Arab/Islamic world. That perception believes that our region is a mess, it spawns violence, it threatens European and Western basic security interests, and it has to be dealt with through the political or even military mechanism of NATO.

This is a terrible Western miscalculation and policy mistake that is likely to exacerbate the Middle East's underlying disparities and tensions, and only increase the likelihood of conflict between these two blocs of states. The spectre of NATO governments working closely with Arab-Islamic governments to suppress the indigenous expressions of political Islamism throughout the Mediterranean Basin will succeed no better than, say, the Roman imperial government's attempts to work with local vassals to outlaw Christianity in the first century A.D., or the attempts by the prevailing tribal/commercial regional power structure to quash the spread of Islam in the Hijaz and beyond in the 7th century A.D. When prevailing political-economic orders are not satisfactory to a majority of their people, they have to change in order to promote human equality and social peace, or else they will be changed against their will.

Religions—and especially religions that are pressed into the cause of political and nationalistic activism—are expressions of the deeper needs and discomforts that bring about such change. In our case, in our universe of Arab/Islamic/Middle Eastern chaos, militant Islamism emerged in the 1980s as the most natural, perhaps even the only possible, antidote to a whole range of problems that plagued and still plague our region and our cultures—problems of police states and authoritarianism, of wide-spread corruption and incompetence in the public sector, of imposed and largely ineffective Western systems of governance, of increasingly grave economic and resources imbalances, and of a brand of deep social and political alienation that has many cultural, political and economic causes.

We and the West should work together to answer some very simple questions: Why is it that a once grand and productive Arab/Islamic culture has staggered towards the end of the second millennium in such a state of chaos that the world's greatest military alliance sees fit to target it as the most serious global security threat of the early years of the third millennium? Why have our people turned to the comforts of religion, historical memories, and, in some cases, violence as answers to the contemporary problems that trouble them and to the fear of a desperate future that haunts their children?

There are, in fact, reasons for our chaos, and a method to our madness. Of course, it is inconvenient for the West to recall that most of the chaotic lands being targeted by NATO today were directly colonised by European powers, often for a hundred years or more. The colonial experience and its transition to post-colonial dependent statehood left us with some serendipitous new countries, quite a few nice railway systems, many gigantic bureaucracies, and hundreds of millions of people who now gravitate between chaos and God—between, on the one hand, the reality of brittle political- economic governance systems that are sustained only by larger and larger doses of foreign economic and security assistance, and, on the other hand, the people's collective hope for a better, more human and just future.

It would be a lot more effective, less traumatic and considerably cheaper for NATO—and for we of the chaotic zones—to investigate and eliminate the causes of our chaos, rather than to flail fearfully and childishly at its surface manifestations. This is what the world has done with some intelligence and much composure in Russia, Eastern Europe, Haiti, South Africa and other distressed lands, where it has systematically tried to address the underlying causes of instability. Why does it not do it in our lands? What it is about us and our lands that has made security, rather than justice and decency, our single most important defining criterion during the last two hundred years? Are we animals who must be pacified, or humans who must live in dignity and hope? Now there's something useful for NATO to think about.

IMF Approves $54 Million Loan for Economic Reform

JN1502102995 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 15 Feb 95 pp 1, 27

[Report by Muhammad Amin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian financial sources have said that the International Monetary Fund [IMF] agreed to grant Jordan a loan amounting to 36 million special drawing units, which is equivalent to approximately $54 million, within the framework of the IMF's support for the economic reform program Jordan is implementing in cooperation with the IMF. These sources noted that the approval of this loan reaffirms that the economic reform program in Jordan has achieved good results on the level of restructuring the economy and that this program continues to achieve better results.

The day before yesterday, the IMF agreed to grant Jordan a $54 million loan. IMF sources said that Jordan achieved more economic progress in 1994 in terms of increasing economic growth and reducing inflation.

Last May, the IMF granted Jordan a loan amounting to $181 million for three years. Moreover, Jordan received $37 million last September.

A well-informed source said that the IMF is now convinced that economic accomplishments in Jordan on the level of structural reform, particularly in the monetary field, and in other financial and economic fields have qualified Jordan to receive more support from IMF and creditor countries. Moreover, the IMF believes that the rate of economic growth in Jordan during last year has exceeded the expected rate and may have reached 5.7 percent, while the rate of inflation was reduced to less than the expected rate. Moreover, the value of Jordanian exports during last year increased in comparison with the year before, which is one of the most important objectives of the program in order to reduce the deficit. Foreign currency reserves have also increased.

Prime Minister al-Hariri Rejects 'Incomplete' Peace

NC1702084295 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 17 Feb 95

[Speech by Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri at a dinner to break the fast in Sidon on 16 February—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] We pledge that we will not give up our right to sovereignty on all our national soil. The will for liberation will not weaken so long as there is an Israeli aggression and so long as there is occupation of our land and an infringement on our sovereignty. [passage omitted] We believe that peace—any peace—and negotiations—any negotiations—will not be complete and just unless they achieve the results that 16 February [1985] achieved [date of Israeli forces withdrawal from Sidon]. We mean by this full withdrawal from our occupied land in the south and western al-Biqa' and not according to Israel's terms and diktats.

The issue of liberation is linked to our national destiny. It will not be the subject of bargaining or blackmail in the bazaars of diplomacy. Some Arab brothers have tried the experiment of an incomplete settlement. The result is that they have attained an incomplete peace and an incomplete sovereignty. We will not be driven into this course, regardless of the difficulties. We will continue to support Syria in its efforts to correct the course of a settlement and revive the equation of a comprehensive and just peace. [passage omitted]

League Chief Meets Birri, Comments on Peace

NC1602205195 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has stated the importance of the Lebanese and Syrian negotiating tracks for the entire peace process.

'Abd-al-Majid, speaking after meeting Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri tonight, said that Lebanon and Syria must regain their full rights.

He declared: This is my conviction. Peace is a strategic option. We are seeking peace with total earnestness and sincerity. Israeli evasiveness is a very serious issue but it will do Israel no good. It will fail to shake Syrian or Lebanese resolve.

'Abd-al-Majid added: We are convinced that the Syrian and Lebanese positions are just.

He stressed the importance of inter-Arab solidarity and coordination but remarked that the Arabs must be frank with each other ahead of reconciliation among them.

The Arab League secretary general announced that the League will participate in the ceremonies for the Day of Solidarity with the South, which will be held in March. He said he received an invitation to this effect from Speaker Birri.

Nasrallah Warns Israel Against War in Lebanon, Syria

Says U.S.-Israeli 'Network' Exposed

NC1702114195 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In the village of Brital, Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah affirmed during a meeting organized by Hizballah that the Islamic resistance is one of the blessings of Imam Khomeyni, who did not praise [word indistinct] in Iran or outside as he praised Hizballah when he argued that martyrdom is a duty for ulemas. Nasrallah noted that Hizballah rose to a position of pride and symbolism for all Muslims. He said: We have thousands of mujahidin who follow the course of martyrdom. There are scores of people ready to die for our causes. He said that [word indistinct] an essential right of the resistance which is Islam and religiousness.

His eminence pointed out that Rabin, who owns over 200 nuclear war heads, merkava tanks, and modern planes, was unable to do anything against the two suicide bombers in Netanya. He said that if numerous suicide attacks take place, no one will be able to [word indistinct] the settlement process. He added that the final battle will be between the Islamic camp and [words indistinct], which is being led by the United States after the collapse of the socialist camp.

The Hizballah secretary general added: After the martyrdom of Sayyid 'Abbas Musawi the enemy did not manage to attack any other Hizballah leader because the security network set up by the Zionist enemy and the United States was exposed. He pointed out that a group that had been entrusted by the American intelligence to kidnap one of the brothers in the Southern Suburb and take him to the eastern sector, and from there to the sea to be taken on board a ship to the United States for trial, was arrested recently. He affirmed that the members of this group are now sitting in the government's prisons. He noted that there are many networks that have not been publicized in the media.

His eminence clarified that the objective behind the event in the south, when an explosive device blew up the car of a Hizballah official and another blew up the car of an Amal official, was to restart the fighting between the two sides. However, awareness and alertness ruined this attempt.

He concluded: If we have so far managed to thwart these plans, it does not mean that the United States and the Zionist entity will stop their repeated attempts.

War Could Set 'Entire Region Aflame'

NC1602190195 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has ruled out an Israeli military incursion into Lebanon, because conditions today are very different from the past.

During a ceremony in the al-Nabi Shit township in Ba'labakk to mark the third anniversary of the assassination of former Hizballah Secretary General 'Abbas al-Musawi, Nasrallah pointed out that any war launched now against Lebanon or Syria could set the entire region aflame.

He said: Time is running in favor of our nation.

Nasrallah maintained that the United States is the basic and real enemy, the party that fights, commits aggression, exerts pressure, and keeps scheming.

Iranian Ambassador to Syria Mohammad Hasan Akhtari said Iran backs the Resistance forces in south Lebanon, declaring: We will not submit to the conspiracies.

A ceremony to mark the same anniversary was held in Jibshit's Shiite shrine. It was attended by several Hizballah officials and other political figures.

Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim delivered a speech on the party's behalf. He said: Our only option is resistance to thwart Israel's regional scheme. We stretch out our hands to all those who wish to fight Israel.

Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon Homayun 'Alizadeh delivered a speech on the occasion. He denounced Israeli aggression against the Lebanese people. He criticized the new world order, describing it as barbaric.

Says Hizballah 'Capitulation' Gone Forever

NC1702095195 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah has affirmed that the blood of Sayyid 'Abbas Musawi succeeded in giving the resistance and the mujahidin a new impetus that they needed at that crucial time. The Hizballah secretary general addressed a large celebration organized by Hizballah to honor the blood of the master of the Islamic resistance's martyrs and all martyrs in the mosque of al-Nabi Shit in the presence of a large number of Lebanese and Syria officials, military men, religious ulemas, and other figures. Sayyid Nasrallah said that if the Zionist enemy believes that at this stage it can invade our land and that the people will flee before it or raise the white flags, then this enemy is wrong. It should realize that it is facing major moral, social, and political changes in Lebanon. The enemy knows very well what fighting to the death means in regards [word indistinct] when it tried to advance.

The Hizballah secretary general stressed that the era of Hizballah capitulation is gone forever. We are now at a time when we, with the sweat of our foreheads, can create our own dignity and honor, as well as the dignity of our people and nation, he said. We are a nation which, through struggle with the Zionist enemy, aspires to regain its glory and civilization this year.

In his speech, Sayyid Nasrallah clarified that if Israel is thinking about striking Lebanon, it will be working to start a war with the whole region. Such a war could topple all the agent and traitor leaders who offer services to Rabin and the United States.

On the issue of the occupied Palestinian territory, which the American side wanted to eliminate from the struggle, Nasrallah said that Palestine today is the Palestine of the Islamic Jihad movement, the Palestine of the Islamic Resistance Movement—Hamas, and the Palestine of the suicide operations in Tel Aviv and Netanya. These operations have shaken the settlement agreement to the core and have placed the Zionists' treachery on a dead-end course, creating a crisis from which they do not know the way out.

Pessimism Over Peace Process Progress Reported

JN1702110695 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 10 Feb 95 p 25

[Report by 'Assaf 'Abbud]

[FBIS Translated Text] An observer in the Syrian capital does not need much time or several meetings with Syrian officials to discover that the Syrian capital is pessimistic about the progress of the peace process on the Syrian-Israeli track and on the level of the region as a whole. The clashes inside the occupied territories and in southern Lebanon reverberate in the Syrian capital, which monitors the developments of the Israeli measures in the occupied territories and southern Lebanon convinced that violence only begets violence, as put by Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in the recent Syrian Cabinet session.

This prevailing atmosphere developed after several signs, which informed Syrian sources feel were the reason for the state reached by the peace process. The failure of the meeting between the Syrian and Israeli chiefs of staff in Washington, the repressive measures in the occupied territories, the Netanya operation, and Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty were signs that strengthened the Syrian leaders' conviction that Israel wishes to impose the peace process on the Arab parties without any regard to the rights of these parties, and that Rabin's allegations on his desire for peace are hollow, as put by a high-level Syrian source. That source adds that the Labor and Likud are two sides of the same coin when it comes to issues such as refusal to withdraw and maintaining control over the Arab territory. This was stressed by Minister Faruq al-Shar' who said: The Israeli Government is practically meeting with the positions of the Israeli opposition in trying to impose hegemony over the occupied Arab territories despite its ceaseless claims that it seeks peace.

Such an atmosphere, a high-level Syrian sources told AL-ITTIHAD, will face Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the peace process in the region. The sources say that Ross used to come to the region in order to boost the peace process, but his next tour will aim to stop its retreat. And while Christopher was seeking to bridge the gap, the aim now will be to stop it from growing.

Diplomatic sources in the Syrian capital believe that Dennis Ross' visit to the region will be a rescue mission to save the peace process after it had suffered several blows.

In this regard, the diplomatic sources told AL-ITTIHAD that Ross will focus on three points in his discussions with Syrian officials:

First, not widening the gap between the Syrian and Israeli positions on the peace process. This gap widened recently with the failure of the al-Shihabi-Baraq meeting in Washington and after the halting of meetings between the Syrian and Israeli ambassadors in Washington.

The diplomatic sources cited responsible Syrian officials as saying that Damascus will brief Dennis Ross on its viewpoint; namely, that there is absolutely no difference between Rabin and the Likud, and that the Syrians view Rabin's actions in Lebanon and the occupied territories as not at all suggestive of confidence building. This will be reflected negatively on the entire peace process sponsored by Washington.

These sources added that Damascus will demand that Washington declare a neutral position on what is taking place, especially regarding the reasons behind violence in the region. Damascus believes that violence is caused by Israel in the first place and by the failure to achieve a comprehensive peace that can guarantee the stability of the entire region.

These sources noted that because the positions of the Rabin government are no different to the Likud's proposals, the call to achieve partial peace prior to the Israeli elections is of no interest to Damascus. This is because Damascus is not in a hurry, and because peace should be comprehensive or not at all. In this regard, and according to these sources, Ross will propose freezing matters at this stage and calming the atmosphere as a first step toward reactivating the Washington talks, in addition to making U.S. proposals that could change the Syrian belief that the peace process is losing momentum and could also lose justification if the course of negotiations is not corrected and returned to the Madrid conference framework.

Second—and the most important point at this stage because it largely affects the U.S. move—is to demand that Damascus use pressure to halt the resistance operations against Israel and pressure the Palestinian opposition factions into halting the intifadah operations in Palestine.

The informed Syrian sources told AL-ITTIHAD that these U.S. proposals will come up against the constant Syrian positions and convictions, which are based on several points, most important of which are:

—That violence only breeds violence, and Israel's building of a security fence will be of no benefit and will not achieve security in the region.
—[Israel's] failure to withdraw and the fact that the agreements signed in the region have not laid the bases of a just peace will keep all possibilities open for explosion and fall of more victims.
—Israel's continued settlement activity and systematic violence will create more resistance operations.

One of the constant Damascus positions is that it distinguishes between terrorism and resistance. It views the Netanya operation and the stands of the Palestinian opposition factions as sound stands of a people who daily face Israeli terrorism. Therefore, they have the right to defend themselves and their land. The Syrian sources say that's why Damascus did not condemn the operation or expel the Islamic Jihad leaders from Damascus, and that's also why Faruq al-Shar' had stated in the wake of the operation that Israel assumes major responsibility for the acts of violence in the region.

Diplomatic sources in Damascus say that the Syrian capital will not abandon its Lebanese and Palestinian allies and that it will step up its political support for resistance operations. This is because Damascus is not ready to give up these cards while Israel persists in its intransigent stand toward the peace process and does not respond to any Syrian demand on the Syrian-Israeli track. Damascus has no convincing reason to abandon the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance, particularly under circumstances which indicate that it will face pressure from various sides to undermine its negotiating stand.

Third, Ross will suggest, while in Damascus, to reactivate the Syrian-Israeli Washington talks and to end the deadlock and protect the peace process from paralysis through the resumption of contacts between the Syrian and Israeli ambassadors in Washington under U.S. auspices. The diplomatic sources in Damascus told AL-ITTIHAD that the Syrian capital is not in a hurry to resume these contacts as all the gestures of good intentions Syria has so far offered have not made Israel change its stands. Although the Israeli ambassador in Washington had announced that these contacts will resume soon, Damascus did not say anything in this respect and is studying the situation in a detailed manner on the basis of the reports of its chief of staff and its ambassador and their meetings in Washington and in light of the exacerbation of the situation and violence in the Palestinian and Arab arena.

Concluding their statement to AL-ITTIHAD, the sources say that during his tour Ross will face difficulties in restoring the fragile trust that used to prevail on the Syrian-Israeli contacts and that Damascus expects the United States to play a more unbiased role in sponsoring the negotiating process and in convincing Israel that violence will not make the Arab sides move toward the peace that Israel plans for the region.

Press on Christopher's Statements, U.S. 'Responsibility'

JN1602145295 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-BA'TH says the statements made by Warren Christopher—to the effect that the Syrian-Israeli negotiations have entered a critical stage and reached a very difficult moment—reflect extreme concern about the future of the peace process. Syria and Israel are the two major players in this process. However, their positions are contradictory. They conflict because Syria adheres to the resolutions of international legitimacy and the foundations of the peace process while Israel rejects and defies the resolutions and principles of international legitimacy and disavows the bases of the peace process—bases which it originally rejected.

The paper adds: No one can believe that the United States is unable to save the peace process from collapse. All the United States has to do is to side with the foundations it has proposed for this process and on whose basis the Madrid conference was held.

AL-BA'TH goes on: The world has welcomed U.S. President Bill Clinton's commitment to the peace process—which was launched by his predecessor—and to its foundations. However, the world expects Clinton to do more than just repeat this commitment. He has to try to talk the Israeli rulers into abandoning their anti-peace stands and their demands that contradict international legitimacy.

The paper says Syria has cooperated from the beginning with the United States in launching the peace process and creating a historic opportunity to establish a just and comprehensive peace. Throughout this process, Syria has demonstrated sincerity and honesty to make this process reach its objectives.

AL-BA'TH concludes: The only way to end this serious predicament is for the Clinton administration to quickly assume its responsibility by persuading the Israeli rulers to accept the resolutions of international legitimacy, the land-for-peace principle, and full withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

TISHRIN states that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher does not add anything new when he says that the Syrian-Israeli negotiations have entered a decisive stage and reached a very difficult moment.

The paper says it is necessary to understand why the Syrian track has reached a difficult moment. Syria is in no way responsible for the outcome of the talks with Israel. Nor is it responsible for the faltering steps and stalemate of these talks. This is because Syria opened the way for a just and comprehensive peace in line with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle when it accepted the U.S. initiative. Had Syria harbored ill intentions, it would not have agreed to take part in the Madrid conference and it would not have offered initiatives to overcome obstacles and would not have continued in the peace process for so long. As for Israel, it agreed unwillingly to take part in the Madrid conference and since then it has tried to obstruct the peace process. In order to sabotage and destroy this process, Israel has pursued a deceptive, maneuvering, and misleading policy. Israel has so far not adhered to the principles of a just and comprehensive peace, the resolutions of international legitimacy, or the land-for- peace formula.

AL-THAWRAH says comprehensive peace in the Middle East will remain difficult, almost impossible, if Israel does not announce its clear and unambiguous commitment to the principle of full withdrawal from the

Golan and southern Lebanon and unless Israel recognizes the Arabs' legitimate right to restore the last inch of their occupied territory. The truth in which all peace-loving nations believe and which no one can disregard is that full withdrawal from the Golan and its return to the motherland, Syria, is the cornerstone for a firm and lasting peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds that whoever wants to advance the peace process and make it succeed should acknowledge this indisputable truth and also understand the current Israeli position—a position that avoids the obligations of peace and offers partial and limited withdrawals from a small part of the occupied Arab territories.

The paper highlights the deceptive and misleading methods in the statements of the Zionist leaders and their false desire for peace. The desire to advance toward peace requires practical measures. Israel knows well that not achieving concrete progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks so far is primarily the result of the absence of a clear Israeli commitment to the foundations of the peace process. This is also because of Israel's continued attempts to scuttle the Madrid formula, which provides for a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East issue.

Commentary: Peace Hopes 'Diminishing Every Day'

JN1602151595 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Hopes of realizing peace in the Middle East are diminishing every day. The whole world—except Israel, of course—knows that what threatens the peace process in this part of the world is Israel's intransigence. This demonstrates Israel's refusal of a just peace, although real peace must be nothing but just. The pillars of the survival of this peace are negated when the rights and dignities of all parties are not respected.

A brief list of what Israel wants and what it does not want shows clearly that if, in fact, Israel does not hate peace, it does not like it, unless that peace supports its ambitions for Arab land and rights. Israel wants to keep the Arab territories it is occupying in Palestine, the Golan, and south Lebanon. It wants Arab surface and ground water, and it wants to control Arab markets. It wants to be able to threaten the security of Arab countries, and to interfere in pure Arab affairs, even in purely sovereign issues related to the sovereignty of Arab countries. Israel is not hesitant about announcing these intentions with a clarity that exposes its arrogance toward international law and the entire international community.

This is what Israel wants. What it does not want is the opposite of all these things: Israel does not want to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories; it does not want Arabs to restore any of the rights it has usurped, such as the Palestinian Arab people's right to self-determination and the right to set up their independent national state. Israel does not want to be on an equal footing with the countries of the region in term of the sense of security. This means it does not want to make this part of the world free of weapons of mass destruction.

What Israel wants and what it does not want show absolutely that Israel does not want peace. Any world issue, no matter how complicated, explosive, or threatening, can be amenable to peace if there is a desire to make peace by the parties to that issue. Therefore, the peace process in the region cannot acheive real and convincing results unless Israel adheres to international law and the Security Council resolutions that call for withdrawal from occupied Syrian land, south Lebanon, and the occupied Arab territories to the 4 June 1967 borders, while taking into considerations equitable, balanced, and equal security arrangements on both sides.

Syria has made clear its position; it supports peace and adheres to the Arab constants that seek peace based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle. Syria understands peace as full peace in return for full Israeli withdrawal.

The international community and its influential forces know very well this peace that Syria wants—it is the peace that the whole world wants because it is based on international law and UN resolutions. Therefore, realizing this peace and safeguarding it against collapse is the responsibility of the international community and its influential forces. It has become clear that it is Israel that obstructs the peace process and evades the requirements of peace, without which no real peace that ensures security and stability can be attained.

Washington Talks 'Failure,' Implications Viewed

MM1602123595 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 14 Feb 95 p11

[Editorial: "Syria and the Failure of the Washington Meeting"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Washington meeting has failed just as the Cairo quadripartite summit conference failed to rescue the Middle East peace process. That exposes the region to possible new bloody developments that would take it back to the pre-Madrid peace conference era, if not to a more dangerous one.

It is clear that the Israeli Government wanted that failure, as is evident in the fact that one day before the Washington meeting, it decided to extend the closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in stark defiance of the feelings of the Arabs and the United States, the sponsor of the meeting and of the entire peace process.

The closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip means denying 60,000 workers their only source of livelihood and a daily income of $750,000 which contribute to various sectors of the Palestinian economy. That is why the Palestinian delegations to the Washington, Cairo, and Erez meetings kept on requesting an end to the closure before discussion of any other topic.

The Israeli Government fears new fedayeen suicide operations similar to the recent Netanya operation which killed 21 Israeli soldiers, if it ends the closure of the occupied territories. It wants a practical pledge from the Palestinian Authority [PA] that it will strike at the Islamic movements and prevent them from carrying out any acts against Israeli targets.

It was hoped that the U.S. Administration would put pressure on the Israelis to ensure success of the five-party meeting it hosted two days ago, but these hopes were dashed when it became clear that the United States flagrantly supported the Israeli position of sustaining the closure policy and procrastinating about withdrawal from the West Bank.

If Bill Clinton, the most Zionist president in the history of the United States, is unable to rescue the peace process and exert minimum pressure on his Israeli allies to lift the blockade against 2.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, then there is no hope for that process and no confidence in the U.S. sponsorship of it.

The only consolation the [Arab] participants in the Washington meeting had was the identity of the Arab positions in the face of the U.S.-Israeli position, with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa insisting that Israel was to blame for the failure of the negotiations and that Israel must sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty if Egypt is to sign it.

That unified Arab position could form the basis for wider Arab meetings for a reassessment of all the Arab steps toward peace since Madrid.

Syria's criticism of the quadripartite summit and the fact that some of its media welcomed the failure of the Washington meeting are the easiest and least costly option. What is required of Syria and its leadership is more than that, particularly as far as trying to save the current Arab situation from the current divisions which have led the Syrian and Palestinian tracks to a dead end.

The Syrian leadership is urged to take the initiative in speeding up real Arab reconciliation and forming a new front to correct the current strategic imbalance, embodying most Arab states including Iraq and, if necessary, Iran. Syrian-Iranian relations should not remain confined to their bilateral framework. They should be transformed into a card of pressure on Israel and the United States, provided Damascus conclusively decides its position on the question of the current settlement.

If the U.S. policy of isolating Iraq and Iran succeeds, one of its main results would be that Syria would be weakened and singled out and that unacceptable solutions and settlements would be imposed. That is why Syria has no alternative but to try to foil that by bringing Iraq back into the Arab fold as soon as possible.

Iranian Envoy Confirms Support for Resistance

NC1702095995 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iranian Ambassador in Damascus Shaykh Mohammad Hasan Akhtari-Foroughi confirmed in the celebration marking the martyrdom of Shaykh 'Abbas Musawi that the Islamic Republic will continue to support the Islamic resistance in the face of Zionist attacks on Lebanon. It also stood alongside all the oppressed people in the Islamic world because that is its legitimate duty. He gave condolences to the Muslims and the resistance fighters in Lebanon on behalf of the guardian of the Muslims, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid 'Ali Khamene'i.

Shaykh Akhtari said: We, the followers of the line of the Prophet Muhammad's school, the school of martyrdom, wish to die in the way this school teaches. Shaykh Akhtari noted that the objective of the U.S. statements is to strike the Muslims and Islam through conspiracies they weave against it. He confirmed: We believe the Zionist statements against the Islamic Republic are tricks and conspiracies. They have to learn that they are facing a strong nation in the Islamic world.

Afghanistan

UN Delegation Arrives for Power Transfer Preparations

LD1602201595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The UN special peace delegation in the Afghanistan affairs has arrived in Kabul to prepare the ground for the transfer of power to a temporary council.

According to our Central News Bureau from Islamabad, the head of the delegation has said despite the recent military and political developments in Afghanistan, the transfer of power will take place from 18 February.

Taleban Force Reportedly 9 Miles From Kabul

BK1602122995 Hong Kong AFP in English 1202 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Report by Mohammad Bashir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, Feb 16 (AFP)—A powerful army of Afghan militant students Thursday [16 February] stood just 15 kilometers (nine miles) outside this capital after forces of President Borhanoddin Rabbani pulled back following an ultimatum.

Afghan sources also said the Taleban, an Islamic force which has grown to an estimated 25,000 men backed by 200 tanks and a dozen Mig-21 aircraft, seized more territory from Rabbani's rival, former premier Golboddin Hekmatyar.

Taleban fighters were seen huddled Thursday in bunches across a road from Rabbani's men outside Kabul as negotiations continued.

"We pulled back to this point peacefully after we were ordered by the Defence Ministry," a Rabbani frontline commander told AFP.

The Taleban were demanding control of other positions once held by troops of Hekmatyar, whose stronghold at Charasyab, 25 kilometers (15 miles) from Kabul, fell to the students Tuesday.

The Rabbani forces withdraw from three strategic points on the southern fringe of Kabul on Wednesday and repositioned themselves closer to the city following a deadline issued by the Taleban.

The Taleban have gained popular support in just six months with their strict Islamic agenda in a country riven by factional fighting between Rabbani loyalists and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami since the collapse of the communist regime in April 1992.

More than 20,000 people have died in strife among the mojahedin factions, whom the Taleban have denounced as "criminal" groups. The Taleban insist their aim is to disarm all groups in Kabul and establish strict Islamic Sharia law.

"They (Rabbani forces) have to leave all the Hezb's positions," said Mulla Borjan, a senior commander of the Taleban based in a hospital at Hekmatyar's former base Charasyab, said Thursday.

A soft-spoken man with a white turban, he insisted that they wanted all issues to be solved peacefully in negotiations with President Rabbani.

Asked what will be their reaction to a UN special envoy's imminent visit to Kabul to implement a planned political settlement involving the factions, he said that they had given a plan of their own to the United Nations.

"We do agree with the UN if it can create a sound Islamic administration acceptable to the Afghan people," he said without giving details.

With the Taleban advancing closer to Kabul, local women were worried about their jobs, believing the militants wanted them to stay home. The Taleban commander said this would be decided according to the Sharia.

Afghan Islamic Press (AIP), a mojahedin mouthpiece based at Pakistan's frontier town Peshawar, said Rabbani forces still held several pockets between Bagarami and Shiwaki on the southeastern flank of Kabul after yielding the three points to the Taleban.

So far no direct clash has been reported between Rabbani and Taleban forces.

AIP also said Thursday that supporters of Taleban had captured Khost, another stronghold of Hekmatyar.

Maulvi Abdul Hakim, police chief of Khost, who is also a supporter of Taleban, seized Matun base in a dramatic assault late Wednesday, AIP said.

Later Hakim's attacking force seized Jadawal military base which also served a major training centre for Hekmatyar troops, and captured a large quantity of arms and heavy weapons, it said.

Meanwhile Rabbani's ally, Rasul Sayyaf of Ettehad-e Eslami, has dispatched a delegation to the Taleban to discuss the future of the pro-Saudi party's main base in western Paghman province, fearing a Taleban onslaught, AIP said.

Diplomats and Afghan experts believe the Taleban are getting external help, possibly from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has issued a denial but fears the Taleban phenomenon could threaten Afghanistan's unity.

Taleban, Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami Agree on UN Plan

LD1602173595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports from Kabul, the Afghan capital, indicate that Afghan Government forces have withdrawn from three of their bases south of Kabul, and that armed Taleban forces have taken over these bases. It is reported that the withdrawal from these bases—which are strategically important in military terms—are located north of Chahar Asiab, the former base of Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami, and took place following negotiations between government representatives and the Taleban.

According to Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami sources in Peshawar, Pakistan, clashes took place today between government and Taleban forces south of Kabul; however, the exchange of fire ended after an hour. The same sources also add that a delegation led by General Ghaznawi, representing the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami, has gone to Ghazni city to hold negotiations with the Taleban. According to these sources, the two sides agreed on a peaceful solution to the Afghan problem by way of implementation of the UN peace plan.

Islamic Unity Party Repulses Attacks

LD1702113595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Following last night's clashes in Kabul, the Afghan capital is relatively calm this morning. According to a spokesman of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan], the Shura Nezar forces under the command of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and backed by heavy artillery launched an attack on positions of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami in western districts of Kabul. The attack last night was launched from the Deh Mazang, Kart-e Sakhi and Silo axes. But thanks to the steadfastness of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami forces, this attack was repulsed. The Shura Nezar forces were forced to retreat after suffering some losses and 14 of their troops were captured as prisoners. The Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami forces also captured some new positions on the frontline separating the two factions.

According to this spokesman, in the course of this fighting, the intense fire exchange damaged the western residential districts of Kabul and wounded six combatants of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami.

The Afghan Government sources have so far not commented on these operations. The Afghan sources are also saying that in the wake of withdrawal of the government forces from several positions south of Kabul, now the armed units of Taleban are stationed in the Chehelsotun palace. The Taleban forces have threatened that the government's refusal to pull back its forces from the important positions in the suburbs of Kabul, which they occupied following the withdrawal of the Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan [Islamic Party of Afghanistan] units, will have some undesirable consequences for them.

Simultaneous with these developments, the UN sources in Islamabad are saying that UN special representative Mahmud Mestiri is supposed to leave for Kabul this afternoon, leading a special UN peace mission.

The plan to transfer power in Afghanistan was to take place on Saturday. However, a UN representative who has gone to Kabul to prepare the grounds for Mestiri's visit and transfer of power to an interim council, has said that the formation of the council might be postponed.

Jalalabad Council Opposed to Taleban Invasion

BK1602131295 Hong Kong AFP in English 1301 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD, Feb 16 (AFP)—The administrative council in the key Afghan city of Jalalabad will set up a new multi-faction force to defend the area against invasion by a powerful army of militant students, Afghan sources said Thursday [16 February].

The council, or shura, of eastern Ningarhar Province, Wednesday decided to establish a force of 1,000 men to protect a 75-kilometre (45-mile) stretch between Jalalabad and Sarobi, against advances by the Taleban army, they said.

The highway town of Sarobi is the new headquarters of former premier Golboddin Hekmatyar, who was driven by the increasingly powerful Talebans from his base at Charsyab, 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of Kabul, on Tuesday.

The sources said all checkposts would be dismantled and that the security of the Jalalabad-Sarobi highway would be manned by the armed force made up off various Afghan factions, including Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami.

The shura would first attempt to persuade the Talebans from entering Ningarhar, since the administration there was functioning in accordance with Islamic tenets and would "step up" its Islamisation process, the sources said.

But, they added, the city would defend itself if attacked.

Jalalabad is the first major Afghan city across Pakistan's northwestern border and a hub of economic activity. It has emerged as a major trading centre because of relative peace in the region.

However, under pressure from the Talebans, authorities recently launched a campaign against opium cultivation, destroying about 20,000 acres of the crop in Ningarhar. They also imposed a ban on Afghan women working in offices.

The Talebans have gained popular support in just six months with their strict Islamic agenda in a country riven by factional fighting between loyalists of President Borhanoddin Rabbani and the Hezb-e Eslami.

More than 20,000 people have died since April 1992 in strife among the mojahedin factions, whom the Taleban have denounced as "criminal" groups.

Kabul Airport Repaired, Ready for Flights

LD1602152795 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kabul airport has again become ready to accept air flights. A source at the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism reports: The runway [words indistinct] and other sections of the airport have been cleared by workers and employees of the above ministry, including workers of the Kabul airport, the aviation department, and the Ariana Afghan Airline department.

Kabul international airport, after the coup of 11 Jadi 1372 [1 Jan 1993], had sustained damage and was out of operation as a result of the continuous launching of rockets by the Golboddin militia. After the creation of a satisfactory climate, the ending of the militia's rocket attacks, and the restoration of peace and calmness, the areas of the Kabul airport have been cleared, and the airport is ready to accept national and international flights. [words indistinct]

India

Editorial Says U. S. Should 'Tame' Pakistan

BK1602122395 Delhi NAVBHARAT TIMES in Hindi 15 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "The Talks and Beyond"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There is no reason to doubt the noble intentions of the Indian president and of India. So, if the President, in his inaugural address to the Budget session of Parliament has invited Pakistan for talks in conformity with the magnanimous traditions, he has done it very well. Although India has the edge in terms of population, resources and military preparedness - and God forbid, if Pakistan really thrusts a war on India, the latter can teach the former a proper lesson even after incurring minor damage - postponing war until its very inevitability requires great diplomatic prowess and a humane approach, and India's repeated offer for talks should be seen only in this perspective. It is obvious that as long as Pakistan feels that it is important to U.S. policies, it will miss no opportunity to harass India. There was a time when in order to trouble the Soviet Union, America needed Pakistan's help. After the collapse of the Soviet edifice, it was generally believed that India could emerge as the most potent regional power in South Asia. Why would the United States allow that to happen? So, under the facade of the Kashmir dispute, the United States started to cause trouble for India. Quite recently, however, India has gained considerable importance in the eyes of the world as a huge consumer market. It is for this reason that the United States was constrained to change its attitude toward India. Now if the United States wants, it can always ask Pakistan to stop interfering in Kashmir and talk to India to find solutions to all the bilateral problems, including Kashmir. The United States also requires Pakistan's help in its dispute with Iran, however, and this is the reason why it is unable to pressure Pakistan to make peace with India, even though it wants to do so. Hence Pakistan's cantankerous behavior continues.

Being a large and important country in international affairs, India realizes its responsibility and repeatedly offers to negotiate with Pakistan. Since Pakistan has repeatedly and contemptuously refused these offers, should India not change its strategy? If India's business interests make the United States indispensable to it, surely the same logic holds true in reverse. Feeling unilateral pressure of this mutual need is not good diplomacy. If as a large consumer market India is important for the United States and other Western countries, what is the harm in turning this importance into a tool of diplomatic pressure? India must impress upon the United States the vital need to tame Pakistan for the sake of peace in South Asia. If Pakistan is not tamed, India will not allow this continued needling by Pakistan to continue indefinitely. The consumer market will remain only if peace is assured in the region.

Editorial Sees Bias in International Trade, UN

BK1602124495 Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 15 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Let There Be A Debate on It"]

[FBIS Translated Text] This year the presidential address to inaugurate the budget session of Parliament was just a formality, containing mainly the reiteration of governmental assertions made previously. What he said regarding the economic reforms was nothing new. Still, his reference did betray the quandary the government is placed in, which is mainly due to its attempt to strike a balance between the two extremes. As the president indicated, one of the objectives of the reforms is to enhance capital investment, and conditions have to be created that attract foreign funds. Creating such an atmosphere involves tackling a lot of problems. The foreign investors would desire markets like those of Europe in which their products would sell like hotcakes. The industrially advanced countries with lots of capital are out to win the world over with the strength of their capital, and are seeking the markets where they can reap the maximum profit. That is why their activities are not governed by the highest business ethics. Deceit, coercion, and intellectual traps are used as effective weapons in their arsenal to capture markets meeting their needs. They fortify their grips on these markets to the extent that they do not allow development of potential competitors. To create markets meeting these conditions, all who are not consumers have to be thrown out of that market, although it is these consumers who carry the market on their shoulders and provide it essential support.

In a democracy, these consumers cannot be neglected totally or cast aside. They exert pressure derived from their innate democratic rights and start demanding their share of the benefits resulting from the economic reforms. It was this demand which was raised recently to bring the human face of the reforms to the forefront, and the president also asserted that the benefits from the reforms must include the poor and downtrodden. This reference clearly indicates that the government is planning to formulate such policies as could be considered to favor only the poor. Subtle hints have been made that the rationed goods could be made available at cheaper rates and a little more could be spent on the various rural employment schemes. Almost all the political parties are promising cheap food, clothing, and better job opportunities for the common man. It is also crystal clear that our reforms have no plan to offer any relief or benefits to the poor. On the contrary, their inherent structure benefits the wealthy. Hence the struggle for the government to depict some of the reforms as being favorable to the poor under a variety of interpretations. This is not a good situation at all, as it raises questions about the very relevance of these reforms. This contradiction in the professed and actual meanings of the reforms was very apparent in the presidential address. A lively debate on this issue in the current budget session could go a long way to resolve this inherent contradiction, and therefore would be quite welcome.

Editorial Cites Benefits of World Bank Loan

BK1602163295 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 13 Feb 95 p 8

[Editorial: "A better option]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The World Bank loan to the Indian financial sector will help some medium level banks to improve their capital adequacy. The best of the public sector commercial banks—like the State Bank of India, the Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank—have made it clear that they do not need the loan. The worst among commercial banks will not get the loan as the World Bank does not believe in burying its funds in lost causes. Six medium level banks will get a set of loans: $300 million for capital restructuring and $200 million of technical assistance so that they can restructure, improve their balance sheets and go to the market to raise money. Although the loan carries with it the risk of devaluation, it is still worth taking the loan. For even in the domestic market, these banks cannot borrow at less than 15 per cent. Thus, unless the rupee devalues by more than seven per cent a year, World Bank credit would be a sound option. If the rupee devalues by more than seven per cent, the domestic rate of interest will also go up as a result of inflation. Thus, even in that case loans from the World Bank would not be a poor alternative.

The recent loan agreement carries with it a back-up facility of $200 million which banks can use to meet the mismatch between their foreign exchange assets and liabilities. Several banks have been lending in foreign exchange for long periods varying from three to five years. But their foreign exchange deposits, primarily from companies which have raised GDRs [global depository receipt] abroad or from exporters, are for lesser duration. This can create short term liquidity problems for banks. The back-up facility will act as an insurance cover against any such liquidity problem. This amount will not add to the forex borrowings of the government. It is a contingent liability on which banks will have to pay commitment charges of anywhere between 0.25 to 0.75 per cent. So the government should actually encourage this type of facilities in place of loans which carry a rate of interest which has to be paid whether the loan amount was needed or not.

Amnesty International's Accusations Viewed

95P50063A Bombay NAVBHARAT TIMES in Hindi 2 Feb 95 p 4

[Editorial: "Amnesty's Portrait"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amnesty International has proved how the Western establishments sheding false tears depend on lies to indict third world countries for human rights violations. A few months back when an English daily divulged that a picture accompanying Amnesty's report of alleged Indian violations of human rights in Kashmir, was not that of a Kashmiri at all as claimed, but that of a woman from Tamil Nadu mourning at a shrine, AI [Amnesty International] tried vehemently opposing it. The photographer realized the bad consequences of such grave inaccuracies and told AI his mind.

That is not all. AI once again accused in its report that between 1990 and 1994, India had executed700 innocent people and wrote a letter of complaint to the Indian High Commissioner in London, Lakshmi Mal Sindhvi demanding a response by the 25th of January. In an interview he gave BBC, he asked if AI was going to proceed without the response and publish its report, why did it even bother to write him in the first place?! The fact that the human rights advocates do not care to know really who is causing these violations and why the Indian Security Force has to act tough. Undoubtedly for the first time they have accepted facts halfheartedly saying that in Jammu and Kashmir, militant groups are also violating human rights, but has not announced how they have shot each and every Kashmiri leader who aspired to democracy in the state. Amnesty has not revealed how Pakistan's spy agency ISI [Inter Services International] has trained Kashmiri youth to take up arms. The autobiographic accounts given by these youths returning after training in terrorist camps would reveal under what conditions they had to become terrorists! It is also interesting that the youth from Ireland aspiring for freedom from Britain are named "Irish Terrorists" by AI and the entire British news world, whereas the Kashmiri youth mislead into believing they want freedom from India are labelled as "militants" by the same entities. If Amnesty wants to look at things in Kashmir as they are rather than through colored glasses, then it will have to recognize the hand on the backs of the agitators there. Then, it will not even need to depend on false photos or one sided reports to conduct its business of human rights advocacy.

Article Cites 'Slumping' Economic Trend

BK1602095195 Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 14 Feb 95 p 6

[Article by Suresh Ram Bhai: "We Are Slumping on the Economic Front"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The process that was started in July 1991 to affect fiscal adjustment has received a set-back in 1993-94, which has significantly disturbed the fiscal balance, as is evident in the fiscal deficit, revenue losses, and the traditional losses. This fact has been revealed by the Reserve Bank's annual report for 1993-94. Together with the monthly report of August, this important document was also published in January.

In the very first paragraph of the report, it says that "in 1993-94 a variety of the economic activities manifested themselves. Whereas the quantum increase was recorded in the GDP, in the fiscal sector an imbalance was created. Together with that, the BOP [balance of payments] position became quite strong. However, these activities resulted in a tremendous increase in currency inflation, imparting an impetus to the process of inflation."

After this, the report says: "The events that affected our economy the most during the year under scrutiny were the unprecedented input of the foreign capital and the tremendous pace in the current account of the BOP. While this augmented our foreign currency reserve in a large measure, it also caused our currency circulation to jump, reviewing the pressures that are largely responsible for causing inflation. The imbalance in certain commodities resulted in making these pressures severe."

Hats off to the Governor of the Reserve Bank Mr C Rangarajan, who did not flinch from accepting the fact without mincing any words to announce the worry-causing consequences of the new economic policy and the economic reforms, which are making commodity prices and hence inflation sky-rocket recklessly. The root cause of this setback in our economy is the fiscal losses/deficit of the Government of India. In all the three spheres—fiscal, traditional, or revenue—losses are mounting. The report gives full details of these losses.

The spurt in the losses betrays the lack or even absence of control of the Finance Ministry on the economic activity in the country. Had there been an iota of control, would the revenue loss have increased by 45 percent and the fiscal deficit by 80 per cent in just a year since 1992-93? In March 1995 when the Finance Minister is to present the new budget, we will know how reckless the situation has become during 1994-95.

Normally when any enterprise starts to operate at a loss its owner or the manager becomes extra vigilant to reduce expenditure as much as possible. He continues to be fidgety and restless until things are set right; but not our Government of India, which shows no such discomfort or restlessness. The expenditures are still mounting instead of decreasing. The position of the state governments is no different. It is obvious that every citizen would like to know the cause of these mounting losses. Have our fields grown barren, or are the dark shadows of famine are covering them?

No, the reality is much more reassuring. The report reveals that our fields are producing gold. In the year 1993-94 our agricultural production touched 182 millon tons leaving the highest production figure, 18 crore tons, during 1992-93, way behind. In the year 1992-93, we had 1 crore 47 lakh tons cereal storage in our governmental warehouses which crossed 2 crore 22 lakh tons figure by 1993-94. Apart from it, the noncereal crops also had a very good harvest. The oilseed production also established a record of 2 crore 18 lakh tons, which is 15 lakh tons (7.4 percent) more than the preceding year's production, although the cotton production figure came down a bit from 1 crore 16 lakh bales to 1 crore 14 lakh bales. The sugarcane crop registered a growth of 91 lakh tons, it rose from 23 crore 8 lakh tons to 23 crore 99 lakh tons.

Like agriculture, the achievements in the industry sector were also commendable. It registered 3 percent growth during 1993-94. In mining and stone quarrying sectors 3.5 per cent growth was registered and electricity production also increased by 7.35 percent.

This way there has been quite commendable production in a variety of sectors. Still the losses have been mounting. This scenario makes us draw the obvious conclusion that some bacteria, so to speak, are internally gnawing at the very vitality of our economy. Prudence demands a quick governmental effort to treat the malady and cure the affliction. However, our government, instead of taking any risk, chose the easy way of taking out loans and busied itself in getting loans by all means. Besides getting them from within the country, it also began to beseech the foreign capitals by genuflecting rather shamelessly before them to serve its this end.

It is an old saying that for the money-lender, interest on the borrowed capital is more expensive than the capital itself. The heavy load of interest on the various loans received by the Government of India has turned out to be the severe curse on our economy. Accepting this fact as the bitter reality the report says: "The growing load of interest on the loans worth Rs. 46,000 crore is going to be the main cause of worry in the budget of 1994-95, which is 42.8 percent of the unplanned expenditure and 53.4 percent of the total revenue income." The outstandings accruing on account of the interest repayment create great hurdles in keeping the fiscal balance.

The enhanced primary losses during 1993-94 and the corresponding increase in the rate of interest will surely make the load on our economy of the mounting loan and interest on it almost intolerable.

The variety of loans and the interest on them have saddled the economy of the country with a tremendous load. A table in the report of the Reserve Bank reveals the dreadful form of the outstandings. Their increase every year displays the poignant inability and failure of our Finance Ministry. After the economic reforms enforced in 1991-92, the government, neglecting the norms of self-respect and public image, has engrossed itself only in getting more loans and searching for ways to borrow more and more money.

The sorry situation has mired the country in the "debt-trap." The Reserve Bank report says that by 31 March 1995, the loans will mount to Rs. 2,775.61 crore, which would become Rs. 48,3545 crore after the addition of the sundry outstandings. The foreign loan figure is already Rs. 49,508 crore which, according to the present exchange rate, would be about Rs. 160,000 crore, making the total of the loans about Rs. 643,575 crore. Since our total population is 91 crore, it means that each Indian is saddled with an indebtedness of Rs. 70.71. Down with such economic reforms and such economic policy!

Our greatest misfortune is that despite the National Planning and the new nation-building projects prices have risen continuously, adding to the hardship of the common man. It was hoped that the enforcement of the economic reforms would provide some relief to our countrymen, but that has been totally belied by the actual situation, which presents a totally opposite picture.

The Reserve Bank report admits that the greatest worry during 1993-94 was caused by the unabating inflationary pressures on our economy. The price index of all the commodities continued to increase, and especially after June 1993, it has acquired a quicker pace. If one views it on a point-to-point basis, one finds that during 1993-94 the annual rate of inflation remained 10.8 percent, which is 3.8 percent more than that of the preceding year.

A little further on, the report laments the sorry aspect of the price situation, which made the prices of the commodities of general consumption like cereals, oilseeds, oil, fibers, cotton, and cotton cloth rise sharply. This indirectly caused the sharp spurt in the consumer price indices.

What causes great dismay is the fact that it is the queer monetary policy of the government that is causing the jump in inflation. The report says: "The foreign investment and the growth of the fiscal deficit, together with the sharp spurt in the cash credibility, was really an unprecedented event." In the second half of 1993-94, the indirect installments of the monetary policy were reused, and the Reserve Bank sold securities worth much more than the investment it received. A backward glance at the Reserve Bank activities reveals that its reducing the primary currency growth to check the very high level sale of securities was woefully inadequate, and this pressure of the extra demand caused inflation to reach the two-digit mark by the end of 1993-94.

But who is responsible for this mess? The governor of the Reserve Bank should be asked whether he was aware of this massive jump in inflation, likely to be caused by the measures taken by him? Was it not the duty of the Finance Ministry to keep a watchful eye on the activities of the Reserve Bank and to prevent it from indulging in such evil doings?

Every page of the 1993-94 annual report of the Reserve Bank bears testimony to the fact that our economic financial and monetary activities are being conducted in a very disastrous manner. The December monthly report of the Finance Ministry offers solid economic evidence to support the above-mentioned contention. It says that in the year 1993-94 the receipts were to the tune of Rs. 3,738 crore in the form of foreign loans an grants, but we had to shell out Rs. 4,850 crore to repay loans and interest on them. This way our coffers became poorer by Rs. 1,212 crore. The same way between April and October of the year 1993-94 we had to repay Rs. 5,426 crore. Thus again we lost Rs. 888 crore in the bargain.

The above scenario shows that our hard-earned capital is filling the foreign coffers. It appears as if the helmsmen of our country are drugged and have lost their senses. Why shouldn't the foreign tycoons then take advantage of this negligence and attempt to establish their economic empire in India?

ModiLuft Airline Urges Aviation Improvements

BK1602155295 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 13 Feb 95 p 19

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Feb. 12 —The congestion at Indian airports because of increase in air traffic has started worrying many civil aviation experts and airlines' top executives. One of them is leading private airline, ModiLuft's chairman, Satish Kumar Modi.

Talking to this correspondent, Mr Modi said even the Director General of International Air Transport Association, Mr Pierre J. Jeanniot during his recent Indian visit cautioned the authorities about the safety aspect.

The aviation scene in the entire Asia-Pacific region, particularly India, was changing fast with more players coming in to fly, Mr Modi said, suggesting that the authorities must look far into the future for upgrading infrastructure, expanding airports and to build new runways.

"We must not commit the mistakes which ruined a large number of private airlines in North America. Competition is necessary but not at the cost of each other's economic health," said Mr Modi, who believes "India is yet to take off to greater heights.'

According to him, China already has 350 to 500 aircraft and India's total domestic fleet, including that of Indian Airlines and private carriers, numbers about 70. "While anyone is free to enter the market," he said, "there must be some policy to ensure healthy growth. In my opinion, a scheduled airlines should have, at least, minimum 10 planes.

"ModiLuft's vision is to have a 40-jet fleet by the turn of the century. Our aim is to be the country's most modern fleet. We will never compromise with safety while increasing our operations," said Mr Modi, adding the carrier was now heading towards having German Lufthansa airlines' 40 per cent equity. "Lufthansa and ModiLuft are already, through a recent agreement, in partnership, and we have three senior executives of the German carrier on our board," he pointed out.

Mr Modi is of the view that the domestic carriers may increase their fares in near future. "There is no cartel of private airlines to control the fares' market. The fact is that no cartel can work in view of stiff competition," he pointed out.

Some time back, ModiLuft entered into an agreement with Indian Oil Corporation for the import of aviation turbine fuel. "This will be a continuing process and will help us in 30 per cent saving in the fuel bill," Mr Modi claimed.

In its first year of operations, ModiLuft has achieved a gross revenue of Rs 94 crore [940 million rupees].

Accord To Set Up Steel Group Signed With PRC

BK1602132795 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and China are to set up a joint working group on iron and steel sector. The group will meet periodically to explore ways for promoting bilateral cooperation in economic, commercial and scientific areas, particularly in the steel sector. A memorandum of understanding was signed in Beijing by the two sides following the visit of the steel secretary.

Weapons Smuggling Linked to Election Violence

BK1602162295 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 13 Feb 95 p 5

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Border security Force (BSF) posts along the international borders with various northeastern states have been alerted following reports that various underground outfits may get a fresh supply of arms from other countries before and during the coming Assembly elections in Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

BSF sources here said on Sunday [12 February] that many insurgent outfits, especially the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), have been trying to procure sophisticated arms from Bangladesh, Thailand, and Myanmar to create disturbances during the Assembly elections in these two states.

Election time is the best time for militant organisations to draw the attention of the authorities through violence, they said, but added that the authorities were ready to face any untoward incidents.

"Couriers are waiting for the supply of arms, which are being transported by sea to Cox's Bazar in south-east Bangladesh. The headload of arms is likely to find its way into Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh and other northeastern states before the polls through various border points," they said.

A senior BSF official said various underground outflts of the north-east use the border route of Tripura, Mizoram and Cachar (Assam) as their passage to and from Bangladesh for arms training.

Last year, the BSF apprehended 51 militants belonging to various underground outfits of the region, when the ultras returned after arms training in Bangladesh.

The outfits that use the Tripura border as their route, among others, are the NSCN, PLA, National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF).

BSF sources said that Naga insurgents have their base camps at Salopi, near the Mizoram-Bangladesh-Myanmar border and the Cox's Bazar area, as well as in Bandarban in the Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh. Manipuri rebels who were intercepted recently by the BSF and the Mobile Task Force (MTF), admitted that Meitei militants were now running their camps at Nagar and Chitalhiya, both in Bangladesh border villages under Sylhet, Commilla, and Moulobi Bazar districts.

Official sources said that the Army has also stepped up surveillance on possible entry routes to Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh in view of the Assembly elections. The guerrillas might take shelter in neighbouring Assam and Nagaland to take advantage of the security vacuum in these states.

The Union Home Ministry has withdrawn many Central paramilitary forces from Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, and Mizoram and deployed them in Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

Iran

Rafsanjani Accused of 'Suppressing' Opposition

LD1602214595 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 9 Feb 95 p1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—A former interior minister has accused the government of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani of suppressing the voice of the opposition inside the country, and invited him or his representative for a debate "anywhere they want."

"We are ready for a debate with Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, or a person he may assign, concerning his executive policies, the deviations from the principles of the revolution, the foreign policy, in any medium he chooses, anywhere he chooses to discuss these issues," said 'Ali Akbar Mohtashami, in a newspaper interview published yesterday.

"Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani enjoys some unique qualities. He is an expert in publicizing his point of view. He can offer justifications for certain important issues at Friday prayers, speeches or interviews. Therefore, he should not feel worried about any of the issues, however difficult they may be."

Ministry Views Arab League Proposal

LD1602115595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman of our country's Foreign Affairs Ministry, in an interview with IRNA, has responded to the recent proposal by the Arab League concerning the membership of Iran and Israel in a regional treaty on elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

He said: The Islamic Republic of Iran, before all other countries, had put forward the proposal of keeping the Middle East free from nuclear weapons and signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]. This is while the Zionist regime not only expressed its clear opposition to the signing of the treaty, but also—by increasing its nuclear capabilities—had endangered peace and human life in the Middle East.

Mr. Mahmud Mohammadi then referred to the repeated statements by the International Atomic Energy Agency confirming that Iran's nuclear programs are for peaceful purposes only. He added: By putting such issues forward, the Arab League gives the Zionist regime the opportunity to continue its refusal to sign a valid international treaty and thereby—in keeping with its own interests—to conceal the danger of disturbing the peace and the balance of power in the region.

In reply to another question by the IRNA correspondent concerning the repeated allegations by the U.S. Government about the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear capabilities, Mr. Mohammadi said: By making such biased and exaggerated remarks, the U.S. secretary of state seeks to justify the Zionist regime's state terrorism and that regime's refusal to sign the NPT.

In response to recent remarks by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, who has threatened that England will refrain from establishing normal ties with Iran as long as Iran continues to insist on its threats against the life of Salman Rushdie, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Affairs Ministry said: The Muslim nations consider support for the apostate Rushdie as an act of support for slander and insult against the sacred notions of Islam.

The biased insistence by some Western countries, such as England, on having no respect or regard for the faith of the world Muslims, will only harm their own interests. The Islamic Republic of Iran considers enmity against Islam and lack of regard for the principle of mutual respect as factors that impede the process of establishing normal relations with England.

SALAM Column Reflects Economic, Social Problems

1995 Series, Number 1

[FBIS Media Note] The Tehran daily SALAM carries a regular column, "Hello, SALAM," based on the purported telephoned-in complaints and remarks of ordinary Iranian citizens. The following series of dialogues between callers and the papei are from January's editions.

These particular complaints deal with Chechnya, political development, SALAM's financial difficulties, the Majles fire investigation, individual rights, satellite antennas, kerosene distribution, and teachers' bonuses.

On Chechnya

[Caller] The oppressed Chechens whose epic resistance has amazed the Western world are Muslims, aren't they? Why don't our press and television cover their story? Why is it that the Turkish people demonstrate in support of Chechens, but Iran shows no reaction so far? I don't believe Russia's crime in Chechnya is any less than that of the Serbs in Bosnia ol the Zionists in the south of Lebanon. [15 Jan p 3]

On Political Maturity

[Caller] I believe one way to deal with the poor economic situation is to try to mature politically. Our main problem is a lack of political participation and the imposition of the views of a handful of people in running many of the country's affairs. If we allow all organizations and groups with particular views (except for terrorist groups and those that do no recognize Islamic government) to become active, they will cancel each other out. In the long run, this will eliminate the rule of the few over the many. Exchanging views will bring forth constructive opinions. [16 Jan p 3]

On SALAM's Financial Difficulties, Paper's Size

[Caller] I hope you can resolve your financial difficulties and the newspaper can regain its full size of 12 pages, or even go to 16 pages [SALAM recently announced that due to financial difficulties the paper would either have to raise prices, which might put it beyond the means of some, or reduce the size of the paper from 12 to 8 pages].

[SALAM] We hope with God's blessing and the prayers of the faithful that we'll be able to do it. [11 Jan p 3]

[Caller] Please, give us an account number so that we can help you.

[SALAM] We are most grateful to our readers. We hope to resolve our difficulties without troubling you. For your information, we'd like to say that our financial difficulties are so great that they cannot be resolved by reader contributions. [11 Jan p 3]

[Caller] Your paper's new small size compromises its quality. The pages on foreign and domestic economic analyses are missing. I ask you to raise your prices if you need to. Quality has suffered. Do other papers face difficulties like yours?

[SALAM] We have reduced our paper to 4 pages, which is a major reduction. Quality, however, has been maintained.

We will do our best to even improve it. [11 Jan p 3]

[Caller] For a while now SALAM has been reduced in size. Everyone in our family likes the paper. If the problem is money, we are willing to pay 20 tumans and cut 10 tumans from our grocery budget. We are not political, neither leftist nor rightist. We simply like the paper. Please don't shut it down.

[SALAM] We are doing our utmost to keep it going without putting any pressure on the readers. Raising our prices might be our last resort. We hope not to have to do that. [12 Jan p 3]

[Caller] I am surprised that you complain about the shortage of paper stocks and the lack of funds. Other newspapers do not seem to have any problem. We see new publications every day. Why don't they have problems? Are you the only one?

[SALAM] Other newspapers have problems like paper shortages. But they may have found solutions we don't know about or they may have found special means of circumvention that are barred to us. [12 Jan p 3]

[Caller] I want to comment on the reduction in size of the newspaper. You may think the problem is basically political. In reality it is mostly caused by management. That is, SALAM and its organization have management weaknesses, and the paper has not been able to resolve its problems and expand the paper. In my opinion, you have to look at the problem mostly from this angle, although political factors can have an impact.

[SALAM] We do not deny management deficiencies and do not see any reason to insist that we also have strengths. We have persisted in our duty, as far as we could, to maintain our principles and values while creating a healthy political environment, to have a logical rapport between people and those in charge in the government. If we have not been able to keep the paper going, we hope there will be others who can profit from our weaknesses and shortcomings and do the job better than we did. [15 Jan p 3]

On Embezzlement

[Caller] I want to thank SALAM for publishing the bitter truth about the recent embezzlement at the branch bank. I want to also thank Mr. Sohanollahi and Mr. Astaneh for uncovering, examining, and following up on the issue in the Majles. [16 Jan p 3]

On Single Foreign Exchange Rate

[Caller] We still do not know what a single foreign exchange rate is. It is said that this policy means one exchange rate. However, the dollar has three rates: 175 tumans, 234.50 tumans, and 268 tumans. Why ride a camel if one wants to crouch!! At least give us an explanation about what single foreign exchange is.

[SALAM] There is yet a fourth exchange rate for the dollar, which sells these days for over 300 tumans and which is bought and sold illegally in the black market. [12 Jan p 3]

[Caller] Why doesn't the Bank Markazi [the Central Bank] take steps to reduce the rate of the dollar from 268 tumans. If the Bank Markazi were to take action to lower it, the price of the dollar in the open market would be less than 300 or 310 tumans. The open market always looks to the Bank Markazi. [15 Jan p 3]

On Majles Fire Investigation

[Caller] Why is there such disregard for our cultural heritage? What happened to the investigation of the Majles fire?

[SALAM] The cause of the fire and the extent of damage are supposed to be announced soon. [11 Jan p 3]

On Individual Rights

[Caller] Recently someone said that the Ministry of Interior's loudspeakers during the call to prayer [azan] broadcast are intrusive and asked them to lower the volume. I am myself a resident in the area. The sound is not intrusive. I think this individual has ideological difficulties.

[SALAM] Other readers have also said that those who complain about the sound of the call would not complain if it were music and even louder. At the same time, something that should not be forgotten is that rights do not belong only to believers. Every city dweller's rights should be taken into consideration. If the sound is too loud or too long, obviously that will irritate some. [11 Jan p 3]

On Banning Satellite Antennas

[Caller] I have a satellite antenna.

Now that we are to get rid of them, do we put them out on the curb for the street sweeper to take or will there be an organization for collecting them? At any rate, the country's foreign exchange was spent on this equipment, and there was no law forbidding their importation. Will you please answer this: Why is having antennas at home against the law?

[SALAM] You will probably find out when the regulations on laws against the use of these antennas are issued. [11 Jan p 3]

[Caller] Please tell Mr. Seyfollahi and Mr. Abolfathi to provide enough information to the public about the collection of satellite antennas, so that people will know what to do when agents come to their homes. Otherwise, thieves might present themselves as collectors. [15 Jan p 3]

[Caller] For years people living in Bandar'Abbas, Bandar Langeh, and other southern ports have been receiving Arab television programs exactly like those broadcast by Western channels. Why did no one worry about a cultural invasion until the satellites found their way to Tehran? If people near the borders are corrupted, no one cares.

Tehranis, on the other hand, must be protected. [11 Jan p 3]

[Caller] I hope that after the Council of Guardians ratifies the bill on the banning of satellites and the time comes to collect them, that the security forces, Revolution Guards, street sweepers or finance ministry officials will not use this as an excuse to come into our homes and start searching.

[SALAM] We opposed from the beginning the solution of this problem by force. Now that the law has been passed, however, it is appropriate for antenna owners to respect the law and to take action on their own. [14 Jan p 3]

On Poor Distribution of Kerosene

[Caller] There is no kerosene in the area of Abuzar Square. All the NIOC [National Iranian Oil Company] branches say that NIOC does not give them any kerosene. The people in this area are at their wit's end. Please print this, so the NIOC can respond to it. Is not our country an oil-producing country? Why, then, do we have no kerosene? [11 Jan p 3]

On New Year Bonus for Teachers

[Caller] I want to thank our officials for this 10,000 tumans New Year bonus. Should we teachers, those of us with 25 years of service, spend this on ourselves or on our wives and children? Is it right that, after years, this should be considered an appropriate bonus to civil servants? Have our officials given themselves the same bonus, too? It would be nice if they were to take the same amount this year, to see if they can manage their budgets on this amount. Someone should let us know how they arrived at this mystical figure. All we ask is that you print this in the newspaper.

[SALAM] If you want to have officials know what people and readers think, this column is your best bet. [11 Jan p 3]

[Caller] The government has decided to give a New Year bonus of 10,000 tumans to civil servants. Will this really resolve the civil servant's problems in these difficult economic times? Will the bonus for Majles representatives and ministers be the same? How can civil servants manage the excessively high cost of living? Should not the government take some immediate measures in this regard?

[SALAM] As far as we know, representatives and ministers do not receive New Year bonuses. [11 Jan p 3]

Interior Minister Responds to KEYHAN Questionnaire

NC1602210095 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 5 Feb 95 p 2

["Text" of KEYHAN Questionnaire "sent to cabinet ministers and officials" with responses by Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt]

1. On the eve of the Second Five-Year Plan, how does Your Excellency assess the First Five-Year Plan's performance in the area of management? Comparing the plan's results with the prerevolution situation, could you please tell us what successes your ministry has achieved in the 16 years since the revolution victory?

2. Recently the government placed the campaign against high prices at the top of its list of priorities, something that the people and the media strongly welcomed. What is Your Excellency's view—regardless of your area of management—on this subject? What factors can contribute to gaining results from this campaign and what obstacles need to be removed?

3. How do you view the international base of the Islamic Revolution in the political and cultural fields, despite the plots of its powerful foreign enemies?

4. Did you ever think before the revolution that one day you would be pursuing important political issues as a minister?

5. If you have any memories of cabinet sessions that are worth sharing, please share them with KEYHAN's readers.

Answer to Question One

1. Since the interior minister's most important responsibility is to ensure the country's security, two factors must be considered:

A. The security of borders.
B. Security within the country.

Even though these are two separate concerns, they are directly related. In addition to signing agreements on independent borders with our counterparts in neighboring countries, the Interior Ministry has strengthened the entry points on the Iran-Pakistan border, which is 987 km long, constructing dams at the passes or digging canals on other routes.

With the help of our Revolution Guard brothers, canals 4 meters deep and 4 meters wide have been dug over 68 km and work is being done on another stretch of 80 km. God willing, next year the Iran- Pakistan border will be complete.

On the Iran-Afghanistan border, which is 945 km long, an embankment of 320 km, 12 meters wide and 4 meters high, has been constructed. Similar work has been started on the Iran-Iraq border in the northeast of the country by our brother Revolution Guards and, God willing, will continue.

Today we have no major problems on our borders. Most of our entry routes from Iraq in the Kordestan area have been blocked with minefields, barricades, and barbed wire. The result is an unprecedented standard of security.

Before the revolution no steps were taken to reinforce the borders and the ill-omened result was that 2 million youths became addicted to heroin. But today, one of the blessings of the Islamic Revolution is that, with a population of 61.260 million, we have only 0.5 million addicts. This means we have reduced the proportion of addicts to one-eighth of the population [calculation as published], and this is a very important point.

Answer to Question Two

There is no doubt that the campaign against high prices at this sensitive historical stage is one of the greatest services to our vulnerable stratum and the deprived people. Even though the Interior Ministry has no direct responsibility in this regard, the scope of its operations has been extended so that we are assisting the government by providing exact figures on the cost of staples. Since we also have control of the Law Enforcement Forces, the Interior Ministry plays an important role in price control.

Today the control of prices, which are unfortunately spiraling erratically and unacceptably, is a form of service to the devout, revolutionary people, especially in the Ten Days of Dawn and the auspicious month of Ramadan, and to the government serving them. So we have the additional duty of assisting the government as devoted and pious Iranians of the Islamic Revolution and as members of the cabinet. We beseech God Almighty to help us in this.

Answer to Question Three

Today the greatest powers appear to us to be contemptible and small and this is one of the greatest gains of our Islamic Revolution.

When we see that in 15 years of plots, which undermined us and assisted our internal and external enemies, the superpowers have failed to do anything against our proud nation, we experience a sense of pride.

Today, in the so-called new America order, when we see the Islamic Republic of Iran in peace while most of the countries supported by the United States are afflicted with unprecedented crises, I send praise to God Almighty that the strength of the Islamic Republic of Iran has crystallized and my belief is further reinforced. [passage omitted]

Answer to Question Four

I never imagined the day would come when the zephyr of freedom would sweep across our county, much less a revolution and an Islamic one at that.

When I was imprisoned in Evin, the Qezel Qal'eh, and the komiteh prisons I never dared hope that I would be freed. When they seared my skin with a blow torch and gouged out all my fingernails I did not even dare hope that I would come out alive. [passage omitted] Yes. I never thought I would be a minister, although I always yearned to serve the nation. Today I have achieved this wish and I see this as higher even than being a minister. Thus, wherever I may be, I consider myself a servant of the people and revolution. Those who know me well can vouch for these statements, that my position is not important for me, that my slogan has always been service to the Islamic Revolution, and that my work has always revolved around the people. This remains my desire. God willing. [No answer given to fifth question as published]

West's, NATO's Assessment of Islam Rejected

NC1602132795 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 12 Feb 95 p 2

[Editorial: "Islam, an Indisputable Reality of Today"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Rafsanjani yesterday said that Islam is an unavoidable reality in the international arena that must be reckoned with.

The president rightly challenged the arrogant powers for their irrational attitude towards the Islamic Revolution and blamed them for brandishing guns against Iran instead of "taking a reasonable stance towards it."

In fact the officials of the Islamic Iran have, for the nth time, announced that Iran does not resort to physical means for spreading Islamic ideals and ideas. Appealing to human nature, as they do, the Islamic ideals and principles have automatically found a responsive audience among the down-trodden and the wretched of the earth in all corners of our globe.

Unfortunately, the Western powers instead of counting on Islamic views as a major force that has moved a considerable number of the oppressed people of the world community, specially those of the Third World, have tried to tarnish the image of Islam and that of the Islamic Revolution by resorting to the label of fundamentalism.

Since the Islamic teachings have their roots in Divine Revelations, they are naturally appealing to the world down-trodden. As a result, the deprived people of the world are categorically opposed to the illegal interests of the globe devourers. It is a natural, spontaneous reaction of the oppressed to the plunder of their assets by the Yankees. This exploitation has so far led to the prosperity of the West and the misery of the Third World.

It should be borne in mind that Islamic ideas are not imposed on any nation or group by force. Therefore, the NATO's recent announcement that the role played by communism in the past is now played by Islam, is a totally baseless comparison.

Hence, as President Rafsanjani in his yesterday's address to millions of Iranians—who gathered at Azadi Square to celebrate the 16th anniversary of their victory over neocolonialim—said, it is better for the West to acknowledge the force of Islam instead of resorting to tumult and ballyhoo, on the one hand, and force and blackmail, on the other.

Islam as a political force is undeniable in the world arena today. It has its own audience among the downtrodden (Muslims and non-Muslims), therefore, it is not in the interest of the West to challenge it. The only alternative is to accept it and acknowledge its status in the world arena.

Azeri Ambassador on U.S. Criticism of Oil Deal

NC1602130795 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 8 Feb 95 p 1

[TEHRAN TIMES Political Desk report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—Ambassador Elyar Seferli said no power on earth had the right to meddle in the internal affairs of the Azerbaijan Republic.

The ambassador was commenting on the recent statement of U.S. ambassador to Baku who raised objection to the Azeri-Iranian oil deal. Through this deal, Azerbaijan receives 25 percent of the profits and Iran receives 5 percent.

"I don't know exactly what the U.S. ambassador said on the five percent share given by Azerbaijan to Iran," said Seferli. "What I know is that no country has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of my country."

"Iran has a vital role in the economic development of the region; the U.S. has nothing to do with what is going on here," he said.

On the route of the oil pipeline from the Caspian Sea to Europe, the ambassador said, "The best and economically suitable way is through Iran and turkey to Europe."

The Azerbaijan Republic signed an agreement with the Western consortium on Sept. 20 for the exploration of three oil wells in the Caspian Sea for $7.5 billion.

Seferli said the agreement will be valid for 30 years, and it was expected that 500 million tons of crude oil will be extracted during this period.

He invited Iranians to invest in Azerbaijan, saying, "Suitable facilities are available for investment in the republic."

Gingrich Remarks Said Made in 'Inebriated State'

NC1602204195 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 13 Feb 95 p 1

[Editorial by Mohammad Kazem Anbarlu'i: "The Diplomacy of Threats and Force"—footnotes in parentheses as published]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich remarked two days before the 11 February marches: "One of the U.S. strategies should be to change the Islamic regime of Iran by force. The U.S. House of Representatives speaker believes that Washington should adopt a logical strategy to combat what he has termed Islamic despotism!

In his address to the higher echelons of the CIA and the Pentagon, Gingrich added: The only long-term strategy that should be formulated is the one aimed at forcibly changing the current Iranian regime. (footnote: VOA 9 February 1995)

These remarks are so ludicrous that they could only have been made in an inebriated state! This is why the U.S. State Department swiftly and categorically rejected Gingrich's viewpoint. A U.S. State Department spokesman said: "The U.S. Government is not in favor of the notion of toppling the Iranian Government." (footnote: VOA 10 February 1995)

This is not the first time the U.S. echelons have bared their fangs and talons to the heroic Iranian nation. Emphasizing a wrathful approach smacks of a despotic and illogical mentality, the kind that ignores the rights of governments and nations and that is the main source of official and blatant human rights violations in the world.

A serious question arises here: Why did Gingrich openly make such a declaration when addressing U.S. intelligence and military officials? The answer lies in the Americans wishing to proclaim that the territorial integrity and independence of every government that does not submit to the will of the Washington administration officials is not even worth a nickel to them. They create a furor so that other countries take notice and rearrange their governments to please them. This is the best interpretation of a diplomacy that is based on force and inspiring terror by flexing muscles.

It is a primitive form of diplomacy that a country can adopt. The Americans have been acting with this kind of diplomacy on Islamic Iran for the past 15 years. Despite innumerable setbacks, they continue to tread the same path.

It is said that in an official letter to heads of Asian and European governments, Clinton sought—by means of threats and enticements—to persuade them to sever commercial relations with Iran. The pretext used for this was that no multi-use commodity should be sold to Iran.

Even though the U.S. Government strives to project that it is opposed to the utterances of the House speaker, it cannot conceal its umbrage at the growing stature of the Iranian nation and the prestige of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The U.S. Government spokesman states: Our aim is to motivate Iran to change its current behavior. (footnote: VOA 10 February 1995).

Every year the Americans formulate a round of black propaganda to spread venom in the minds of the Iranian nation. This propaganda is aimed at eliminating any sensitivity in the minds of the people regarding political issues, magnifying problems, downplaying the achievements of the system, exaggerating the power of the enemy, masking the capabilities of the system and people, and scattering the clouds of pessimism and despondency on the bright horizons of life in Iran. Then they wait to see the results of their efforts on 11 February and start to make assessments.

Every year they try to gauge how much they have progressed in this regard. Fortunately, with the presence of millions, the Americans perceive that every year they have taken a step backward. They have not yet realized the secret of this retrogression; it lies in their propaganda being based on lies, accusations, and calumny, therefore it always works in reverse.

Certainly, U.S. intelligence services and the satellites that take aerial photographs of the 11 February marches have provided detailed reports for White House officials. Again this year they are forced to implement their repetitive policy of past years so that they can test their luck—as they have done on numerous occasions—with regard to effecting a so-called change of the Islamic regime by force.

Foreign Ministry Summons Afghan Envoy

LD1702114095 Tehran IRNA in English 1056 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 17, IRNA—Following the heavy fire launched by Ahmad Shah Masud's troops on people in the western parts of Kabul Thursday night, the Afghanistan ambassador to Tehran was summoned to the Foreign Ministry.

Deputy foreign minister for Asian-Pacific affairs, Ala'eddin Borujerdi, expressed Iran's profound concern over the danger to the lives of ten of thousand of innocent people in western Kabul.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran which has always rendered the required assistance to the Afghan nation and has never spared any efforts to solve that country's problem, cannot remain indifferent to the massacre of Kabul's innocent people, and strongly expects the Afghanistan Government take reconsider its latest action," he said.

The Afghan ambassador, promised to inform his government of Iran's deep concern regarding the developments in Kabul.

In related news, the representative of the Taliban militant movement in Peshawar, Pakistan, in a contact with the Iranian consulate, denied the reports on participation of Taliban forces in launching attacks on Muslims in western Kabul. He said the Talibans have not launched any type of aggression on the western parts of Kabul.

'Bright Horizon' for North African Relations

NC1602190495 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES (International Weekly) in English 9 Feb 95 p 12

[Commentary by Mohsen Paka'in: "Bright Horizon for Iran-North Africa Cooperation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Reports indicate that the Iranian Foreign Ministry's Institute for Political and International Studies will hold the second seminar on, "Africa, avenues for development and cooperation," to explore approaches for boosting relations between Iran and North African countries.

Researchers from Libya, Maghreb, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, England, France, and the United States are to take part in the seminar in May.

North Africa comprises the Arab countries at the Mediterranean Sea, from Maghreb in the west to Egypt in the east. The proximity of North African countries to Middle Eastern countries has brought about an inseparable association between the two.

North African countries share the Arabic language and Islam with other Islamic and Arab countries; they have common political ideals. Iran's relations with North African countries dates back to the Achaemenian dynasty.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iran paid more attention to North African countries. But due to misunderstandings, propagated mainly by the enemies of Iran and Islam, good relations between Iran and North African countries could not be developed as expected.

Holding the seminar on Africa can help find avenues to further develop Irano-African relations, especially in economics. Many political analysts consider economic relations as support for setting up political ties.

Iran and North African countries share many common interests which can bring about stable relations between them.

Islam is the first common point between Iran and North African countries, bringing together Muslims, regardless of race or language.

On the other hand, Iran and North African countries are among Third World countries going through the first phases of industrialization. The economies of such countries are largely dependent upon export of raw materials, while they need to import high-tech equipment.

After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, North African countries have been in an economic adjustment phase, turning to a market economy and focusing on privatization.

Due to present economic problems in West, North African countries are losing hope for receiving financial aid from the West. They are experimenting with standing on their own feet and fortifying the south-south cooperation. This situation encourages further economic cooperation between North Africa countries and Iran.

The seminar on "Africa, avenues for development and cooperation" can study the economic capabilities of North Africa, encourage investment by the private sector, and urge the government to furnish the private sector with commercial services.

Having an air link between Tehran and one of the North African capitals, activating Iran-Egypt shipping lines, joint governmental investments, activating banking systems between Iran and North Africa, and rendering services to businessmen by Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines can be constructive achievements of the seminar.

Holding the seminar on "Africa, avenues for development and cooperation" signifies the Islamic Republic of Iran's objective to develop relations with North Africa.

DPK Issues Statement on Arrest of Two Kurds

NC1702080295 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1630 GMT 16 Feb 95

[Statement by the Democratic Party of Kordestan Political Bureau on 14 January]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear compatriots, patriotic Iranian and Kurdish forces, and humanitarian forums and organizations: On Thursday, 6 Bahman, 1373—26 January 1995—two Iranian Kurdish refugees who were heading for their homes near Rawandoz in Irbil Province of Iraqi Kurdistan from Diyanan were arrested and [word indistinct] at the (Toran) checkpoint, which is under the control of armed revolutionary hezbollahs. The two Iranian Kurdish refugees are:

1. Molla Ahmad (Khezeh), son of (Eqbal), 29 years of age, married with one child, resident of (Kanigraq) village in Naqadeh.

2. Majid (Fowzuli), son of Ahmad, 38 years of age, married with four children, resident of (Siavan) village in Oshnaviyeh.

Previously, these two compatriots were active in the Democratic Party of Kordestan of Iran [DPK]. However, they stopped their party activities three years ago. Because of their record of political activities, they did not dare to return to Iranian Kordestan and continued to live in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Immediately upon being informed about the arrest of these two compatriots, the DPK started a search for their whereabouts. Since Diyanan is under the control of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan—United [DPKU], it asked for the assistance of this party. However, all these efforts were fruitless until a few days ago when it was revealed that these two compatriots had become the victims of a disgraceful crime. In a bid to serve the Islamic Republic regime, they were handed over to the executioners of the regime and are now in [name indistinct] prison.

In view of the reactionary spite and hatred that the Islamic Republic of Iran has toward the children of the Kurdish nation and in view of the criminal record of this regime, the lives of these two innocent compatriots are seriously threatened and we are extremely worried that they will have already been sent to the gallows by the time this statement is published. Therefore, while revealing this crime and condemning this inhuman and immoral act, we call on all Iranian and Kurdish organizations and parties and on each and every respectable compatriot to express their aversion to this crime and to prevent, in every possible way, the repetition of such criminal acts.

We also call on all humanitarian forums and organizations defending political prisoners to strive to save the lives of these two compatriots and to prevent the hands of the reactionary Iranian regime's executioners to be tainted with their blood. We especially expect the DPKU to do its best to arrest and punish the perpetrators of this crime and not to allow such treason to go unanswered.

[Signed] The Democratic Party of Kordestan of Iran, Political Bureau

[Dated] 25 Bahman 1373, 14 February 1995

Norway's 'Childish' Policy Criticized

NC1702105295 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 8 Feb 95 p 2

[Editorial by M. Shahidi: "From a Position of 'Strength'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The recent developments in Iranian-Norwegian relations that have downgraded our ties is the outcome of our Foreign Ministry's "correct understanding" of mutual relations according to diplomatic custom and its viewpoint in which "safeguarding the country's dignity" supersedes international political considerations, one of the prevalent principles in the world today.

Last week our Foreign Ministry spokesman warned the Norwegian Government: "Iran will not send a new ambassador to Oslo until Norway regulates its diplomacy in accordance with international standards and norms, and the Islamic Republic of Iran will fully implement the economic measures it introduced several months ago." He stated that the reason for this decision was that "in recent months the agenda of the Norwegian Government and its mass media and organs has repeatedly insulted Islam and Islamic values."

Until it was revealed that the Iranian ambassador to Norway had been recalled, the public was uninformed about developments in bilateral relations—one of the shortcomings of the country's diplomatic machinery. The Norwegian Government's hasty and emotional reaction to the recall of the envoy showed that such boastful but rootless countries are in a weak position and that a strong and principled approach toward them can immediately reveal their shortcomings and weaknesses.

The esteemed leader has summed up the country's foreign policy doctrine in three words: strength, wisdom, and expediency. These are the same principles our late imam emphasized. Despite the pressures emanating from the eight-year imposed war, he never sacrificed the principle of "strength" for the sake of "seemingly national interests," which some terrified people wanted.

The everlasting fatwa on Salman Rushdie, which was issued by the great man of history, was a valuable lesson for us and for the other countries in the world of Islam in the correct understanding of principles ruling international relations. The Foreign Ministry response in the face of the Norwegian Government's "excessive demands" only further emphasized the Islamic Republic's practical policy on the global scene. This step showed that although the Islamic Republic of Iran wants friendly relations based on mutual respect with all countries, it will never tolerate the excessive demands of other countries. It also showed that the Rushdie issue and the demand to lift the fatwa on him, which led to the developments in Iranian-Norwegian relations, are merely foolish demands.

If a small country like Norway had not gone beyond its limits, but had spoken and acted in proportion with its size, relations between the two countries would not have reached this point. We hope that another lesson the countries supporting Salman Rushdie will have learned is that under no circumstance will Iran sacrifice its firm principles for economic interests and benefits.

The Norwegian Government's childish policy on Iran has shown that despite all their civilized!! allegations, the Norwegian statesmen cannot understand that insulting the beliefs of 1 billion Muslims does not conform with any of the principles of humanity and civilization and that defending a wretched person like Rushdie, who has insulted these beliefs, under whatever so-called humanitarian! mask this defense might be, is unacceptable, never mind Norway's demand to lift the fatwa.

Karun River Dam Construction Near Completion

LD1602194495 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The construction work on tunnels and channels supplying water to the Karun-4 dam and an hydroelectric power plant will be completed by the end of the current year [ending 20 March 1995]. Our correspondent reports from Ahvaz:

[Unidentified correspondent] The Karun-4 dam and power plant are under construction on the Karun River, 23.5 km from the Abbaspur dam and 25 km from the town of Masjed Soleyman. The dam is made of stone chips, with a clay core. The height of the dam is 164 meters, the length of its crest is 480 meters, and the width of its crest is 15 meters. The capacity of the dam is 228 million cubic meters. The 1,000-megawatt power plant consists of four 250-megawatt powerhouses. The dam is capable of producing 3,700 gigawatts of energy per year. The dam will save $200 million a year. [sentence as heard]

According to an agreement signed between the governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Japan, the total budget required to complete the project is estimated at 160 billion yen and 400 billion rials. So far, $45 million and 1.7 billion toman have been spent on the construction of the dam's tunnels and channels.

The contract for the construction of the project was signed on 21 December 1994. The amount of the contract totals $321 million, as well as 248 billion rials. It is envisaged that the construction work on the two projects will be completed by the first half of 1378 [year beginning 21 March 1998] [Video shows dam construction work in progress]

Nepal

Minister Puts Famine 'Threat' on Europe Agenda

BK1702060995 Hong Kong AFP in English 0440 GMT 17 Feb 95

[Report by Kedar Man Singh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, Feb 17 (AFP)—Nepal on Friday [17 February] started ringing alarm bells over a possible famine in the country after poor rains cut rice production.

Foreign Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal has put the threat at the top of his agenda on a tour of major European donor countries. The government has also appealed to India for help.

"Inadequate rainfall between June and September last year cut the production of paddy by between 17 to 20 percent," an Agriculture Ministry official said. Around 38 of the country's 75 districts were at risk, he added.

"To avoid deaths or famine in the far northwest, northeast and in certain lowland tropical region districts adjoining the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the Nepalese Government is seeking food aid from outside," he told AFP.

In an effort to meet chronic food shortages, the authorities are negotiating with the Indian Food Corporation for 100,000 tonnes of par-boil rice, the official added.

The government has also approached Japan, Germany, Britain and other aid donor countries requesting food, said Nepal, who is also deputy Prime Minister in the communist government.

The minister left Kathmandu on Wednesday on a 12-day official visit to France, Germany, Belgium, Britain and Switzerland.

"I will be holding talks on food aid and economic assistance to Nepal with the government leaders of the five European countries during my visit to these countries," he said.

The foreign minister is also to meet his German counterpart Klaus Kinkel and Minister for Overseas Development Cooperation Karl Dieter Stranger, to discuss German cooperation and food assistance.

A Finance Ministry official said the decrease in the Himalyan kingdom's food production could cut economic growth by as much a 60 percent.

Bumper food production during the 1993-94 fiscal year, which ended in mid-July, had helped boost gross [sentence as received]

"This year's shortfall in paddy production is expected to lower GDP growth to 2.8 percent during the 1994-95 fiscal year."

During 1993-94, paddy—unthreshed rice—production represented nearly 60 percent, or 3.5 million tonnes, of Nepal's food production of 5.9 million tonnes, he said.

In the previous financial year, paddy production hit 2.58 million tonnes out of a total food output of 4.9 million tonnes, the Finance Ministry official said.

He warned that this fiscal year food output was expected to plummet as a result of the poor monsoon. "During 1994-95 financial year, Nepal's total food production is estimated to be barely five million tonnes only," he said.

Pakistan

Home Minister Denies Aimal Kansi in Balochistan

BK1702095895 Karachi DAWN in English 16 Feb 95 p 5

[Report by Saleem Shahid]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Quetta, Feb 15: The Balochistan Home Minister, Mr Ghazeen Marri, has categorically denied that Aimal Kansi is present in Balochistan.

Wife of one of the slain CIA officials had claimed that Aimal Kansi was still in Pakistan. Her views had come on the occasion of the second death anniversary of her husband.

Talking to this correspondent, Mr Marri said that Kansi's presence in Balochistan was out of question as a huge amount of cash reward had been announced by the US administration for information leading to his arrest. The Balochistan Minister cited the case of Ramzi Yusuf who was caught following an information passed by an informant. Similarly, if Kansi was present or hiding somewhere in Pakistan, then he would definitely be arrested as the cash reward was very big.

The minister, however, did not rule out the possibility of Kansi's presence in Afghanistan or Iran as he hardly could live in any other region.

Explaining Kansi's possible state of mind, Mr Marri said, "Kansi is definitely on the run, and he hardly could stay at one place for long-Kansi must be suspecting everyone around him irrespective of his relations, including the man who might have been providing him shelter," the minister observed.

The Balochistan minister brushed aside the presumption that the provincial government would not cooperate in the efforts leading to Kansi's arrest. He said, "We are extending full cooperation in this regard as we will not allow any terrorist to use our land."

Referring to the FBI raids for arrest of Kansi sometime last year, the minister said that the FBI and the Pakistani agencies kept the information to the minimum. It did not mean that there was a mistrust on the government of Balochistan, Mr Marri said. The secrecy was kept for individuals who would have leaked the information in regard to raids conducted in this provincial capital, the minister added.

Meanwhile, one of the relatives of Aimal Kansi, who requested anonymity, said that Aimal Kansi did not contact his family members. "There is no word about Kansi's presence, and his whereabouts are not known to us," he said.

He had neither telephoned, nor he had established any contact with his family, he said.

Editorial Suggests Ways To Meet Defense Needs

BK1102094995 Lahore JANG in Urdu 8 Feb 95 p 14

[Editorial: "Pakistan's Defense Capability—Foreign Minister's Admission"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, in a written reply during question hour in the National Assembly, admitted that Pakistan's defense capability has been affected and weakened as a result of the U.S. military aid suspension. The foreign minister said since Pakistan has traditionally relied on the United States to meet its defense requirements, the suspension of the defense supplies from that source will naturally and inevitably affect the country's defense capability. The United States, he said, cannot provide economic and military aid to Pakistan because of the Pressler Amendment. All kinds of U.S. aid to Pakistan have remained cut off since 1990 when President George Bush could not certify that Pakistan neither possessed a nuclear weapon nor was it trying to manufacture one.

The entire country is aware of the facts that the foreign minister has stated in the National Assembly. We know that the United States has also not supplied the military equipment which we had bought from it and paid over $1.4 billion for. In addition to that, the United States is also withholding some defense equipment which we sent there for repair. The restriction on defense supplies was imposed five years ago, but we have neither been able to have it removed nor have our money returned.

Undoubtedly, the previous government as well as the present one have tried to convince the United States that the Pressler Amendment is unfair and has not helped achieve the objectives for which it was enacted. Therefore, there is no reason for it to remain operative. This is also true that Pakistan's efforts have brought about a slight change in U.S. thinking, which is borne out by the recent speeches and statements of the U.S. defense secretary, but even the defense secretary did not say that the Pressler Amendment should be abrogated.

Under these circumstances, Pakistan ought to have tried during these five years to meet its defense needs from sources other than the United States to maintain our defense capability, so that our military strength to counter the perpetual threat to national security would not have weakened as much as the foreign minister has admitted. We ought to have thought that in the presence of the Pressler Amendment, the United States might refuse to supply us with any kind of military equipment, including the fighter aircraft, under the pretext of this legislation. Alas! We could not fully fathom this risk or possibility and continued to pay for the aircraft. We, actually, stopped paying installments for the F-16 aircraft only recently.

This is also a matter of concern that neither the previous government nor the present one did its best to find alternative sources and means to meet our defense requirements. China is our age-old friend and some kind of defense cooperation has always been there with it, but we have not been able to buy fighter aircraft and submarines from it. It is also said that the Pakistani-Chinese friendship has lost some of its warmth for various reasons. The foreign minister should not only inform the nation that our defense capabilities have been affected as a result of the U.S. military aid suspension, he should have also told the nation as to what steps the government was taking to counter this situation and to keep our defense forces always in the state of readiness.

It is true that there has been some improvement in the U.S.- Pakistani relationship in recent months, but, as stated above, there is still no chance of the Pressler Amendment being repealed. Therefore, we should step up our efforts to find alternative sources to meet our defense needs, especially under the circumstances in which it is difficult to say whether and when the Pressler Amendment will be revoked. At this juncture, it would not be inappropriate to say that the governments that ruled the country during the past five years did not try as much as they should to maintain Pakistan's defense capability at a particular level. If it was not so, then the foreign minister would not have to confess that our defense capability has been affected in the wake of the suspension of the U.S. military aid.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is scheduled to visit the United States in April. We should take advantage of this opportunity and emphatically place our views before the United States and try to persuade it to change its discriminatory attitude toward Pakistan. If after the prime minister's efforts the U.S. Government does not change its attitude, Pakistan should give up hope once and for all about resumption of U.S. military aid and work actively to find alternative sources to replenish and strengthen our defense capability. We must also give up the habit of relying on the United States in any respect.

Recently, the U.S. defense secretary spoke of the possibility of a joint military exercise between India, the United States, and Pakistan. If we have already agreed to this proposal, then we should also reconsider this decision so as to avoid creating a false impression among the public that we will continue to maintain our cooperation with the United States no matter what treatment Washington metes out to us. We, as a self-respecting and honorable nation, must not go on displaying our goodwill unilaterally. Instead we should be ready to extend our cooperation only when we find that the other side is ready to treat us in the same fashion.

Antisubmarine Weapon Production

BK1702031195 Lahore JANG in Urdu 15 Feb 95 p 14

[Editorial: "Significant Progress in the Production of Antisubmarine Weapon"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reliable sources, Pakistan has produced an antisubmarine weapon to foil any Indian attempt of a naval blockade during a war. It is capable of detecting enemy submarines and destroying them. The weapon underwent four preliminary tests, and after the final test at sea it will be handed over to the armed forces. The naval strength of a country nowadays plays a very effective role in its defense. This is why all countries are trying to the best of their ability to strengthen their navies. Pakistan's resources are very limited. However, God has bestowed upon its scientists the talent and prowess to enable them to stand proudly with other contemporary scientists in the world.

Pakistan needs to pay special attention to its naval defense because one of its big neighbors, which has not yet accepted Pakistan's existence in its heart, is engaged in building up and revamping its navy in a manner that will enable it to fulfill its interests and heinous designs in all of South Asia.

The present government is fully aware of this situation and is making every effort to strengthen Pakistan's naval defense within the resources at its disposal. Given this situation, the production of an antisubmarine weapon by a team of national scientists and experts under the leadership of the chief of a defense organization is an important step toward strengthening the country's navy and achieving self-reliance in the defense sector. It is hoped that Pakistani scientists and defense organizations will continue their admirable efforts to end our dependence on others in defense production and to realize self-reliance.

Joint Military Exercises With India Rejected

BK1102094595 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 4 Feb 95 p 10

[Editorial: "Joint Military Exercises With India—An Impossible and Absurd Idea"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Addressing the Foreign Policy Association in New York, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry has said that it is possible to hold joint military exercises between Pakistan, India, and the United States in the regions where the three countries might be engaged in peacekeeping efforts. Perry claimed that during his recent visit to Pakistan and India he succeeded in making them agree to conduct joint exercises, adding that this represents significant progress toward restoring confidence in South Asia. The governments of Pakistan and India know better how far Perry's claim and announcement are true, though it is hard to take them at face value.

There is no doubt that as part of the UN troops, Pakistani and Indian forces are jointly engaged in peacekeeping efforts in some parts of the world, however, it is absurd even to think of the troops of these two countries directly taking part in a joint exercise. It is difficult to accept the idea, at least for Pakistan, whose troops even today are positioned face-to-face with Indian troops at Siachen, where the most expensive war on earth has continued since the mid-1980s.

Moreover, since 1947 the two countries have fought three wars at the international borders. In 1971 India, with the help of its military might, separated East Pakistan from Pakistan and created Bangladesh. Now, for the last six years, 600,000 Indian troops are engaged in suppressing the freedom struggle in occupied Kashmir, subjecting the Kashmiri Muslims to unbearable oppression and repression. According to the formula of the partition and independence of India, the Kashmiri Muslims are Pakistani nationals and are part of us. The molestation of Kashmiri women is tantamount to molestation of our mothers, sisters, and daughters.

The Pakistani Foreign Office yesterday expressed grave concern over the Indian troops' atrocities against innocent Kashmiris and violations of the Line of Control, and has appealed to the international community to force India to mend its behavior. If this was the position of the Pakistani Foreign Office until yesterday, then the authenticity of Perry's remarks becomes doubtful. No sensible Pakistani can even think that the valiant, self-respecting, and patriotic armed forces of Pakistan will yield to any pressure to hold joint military exercises with India.

Since 1947 the Pakistani armed forces have been performing their professional duties with excellence and our brave, courageous and self-respecting soldiers and officers have not refrained from sacrificing their lives to ensure Pakistan's existence and protect its security and independence. The stories of bravery and courage of Pakistani soldiers and officers in the recent fighting in Siachen constitute a golden chapter in the history of gallantry. We believe that not only the Government of Pakistan will immediately issue a statement rejecting the salvo fired by Perry, but the Pakistani armed forces will also be in the forefront to reject the idea.

Every citizen of Pakistan, whether civilian or soldier, considers India to be the number one enemy. Until Kashmir is freed from India's clutches and becomes a part of Pakistan, the minimum duty which we are required to perform is to openly declare India to be an enemy and to boycott it at the social, commercial, and every other level. If we remain soft toward India, then how can we expect the Islamic world to snap its diplomatic and trade ties with India? We will have to prove to other brotherly Islamic countries by our actions that India is not a country with which one should develop trade ties, because India spends the money which it earns from these transactions on armaments, and with these arms it massacres Kashmiris. We should refrain from providing funds for the bullets which are piercing the chests of our brothers. In no way can we hold joint military exercises with Indian troops.

Foreign Office Denies Holding Indian POW's

BK1302115295 Islamabad THE NATION in English 13 Feb 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Fahd Husain]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad—Is Pakistan still holding on to Indian Prisoners of War (POWs) since the 1965 and 1971 wars? The Indian High Commissioner says yes, but the Foreign Office strongly denies it.

"There are 53 Indians belonging to our armed forces which are listed as Missing in Action (MIAs) since 1971," says High Commissioner S.K. Lambha.

"We have no such information" say officials at the Foreign Office. "The figures being cited are nowhere near Indian prisoners in Pakistan. These Indians here are undergoing imprisonment on normal criminal charges and most of them are illegal immigrants."

The MIA issue is not a new one. However, this latest controversy has ignited after allegations made by Indian Minister of State for External Affairs R.L. Bhatia in an interview.

He is reported as having said that Pakistan has been holding 770 Indians, including 70 officers from the Indian armed forces, in its prisons for nearly 30 years.

In the interview with the Press Trust of India news agency, Bhatia said that these prisoners also included women and children of Indian origin who were taken prisoner during the two wars.

High Commissioner Labha says that 53 Indian armed forces personnel are indeed unaccounted for and are believed to be still held prisoner in Pakistan. He also says that other civilians, including many fishermen, are also detained in prisons. But has this issue been raised in Pakistan-India bilateral talks? The High Commissioner says yes. Has anything come out of them? No.

This however is only one side of the picture. Pakistan too has a long list of accusations regarding its citizens being detained illegally in India. Says a senior official of the Foreign Office: "Pakistan has been demanding counsellor access for Pakistanis in Indian jails without success since December 1993.

"He says Pakistan has also not been provided satisfactory information about its citizens being held in India and that in many cases the basic access required under international agreements has been denied.

Seismic Center To Monitor Indian Nuclear Program

BK1402084995 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in Urdu 0800 GMT 14 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. N.D. Khan, the minister for law and justice, has said that the establishment of a seismic center in Chakwal is aimed at monitoring India's nuclear activities and that no other country will be provided with information gathered at the center.

He was speaking on a call attention notice by Mr. Muzafar Ahmad Hashemi, Mr. Zuhair Akram Nadim, and Chaudhry Jaffer Iqbal in the National Assembly today. Mr. N.D. Khan said that Pakistani scientists and personnel control the center and there is no truth in the propaganda that the center is intended for use against neighboring or friendly countries. He said this was propaganda being carried out in the Indian media. He said the installation of the seismic center is actually part of the international monitoring system and that India itself is receiving this system. He said China is supportive of this international system while Iran was one of the participants in the conference on disarmament.

Committee Formed To Monitor Foreign Projects

BK1102134195 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 11 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister has set up a special committee headed by the federal commerce minister to monitor the progress of foreign investment in the country. Federal Commerce Minister Chaudhary Ahmad Mukhtar told the APP in London that the committee will comprise four members, including the chairman. He said the committee will monitor the progress of projects based on foreign investment identified in the memorandums of understanding signed with various countries. The commerce minister said despite setbacks in some areas, like the shortfall in cotton production, Pakistan's exports remained almost on target. He said based on the figures until December 1994, Pakistan achieved a growth rate of 16.1 percent in exports against the target of 16.86 percent. The commerce minister said the government is taking steps to increase the sale of Pakistani products in world markets.

Local, Foreign Firms Involved in Power Generation

BK1302114595 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 13 Feb 95 p 12

[From the "NA (National Assembly) Questions" column]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Islamabad, Feb. 12: Minister for Water and Power Malik Ghulam Mustafa Khar told the National Assembly that government had signed agreements with 30 local and foreign companies for the generation of 7087.50 MW more electricity in the country.

Responding to a question by Ch. Muhammad Jaffar Iqbal, Mustafa Khar said that after the announcement of the new energy policy, an overwhelming response was received both from the local and foreign investors. He said that government had signed agreement with 30 local and foreign companies.

To a question by Hafiz Muhammad Taqi, the Water and Power Minister said that the total investment envisaged, if all these projects materialised, is around US 7 billion dollars.

He said that presently the average tariff being charged to the consumer by WAPDA [Water and Power Development Authority] is 1.68 KWH. He said that the WAPDA will pay US 6.5 cent KWH about 1.95 to the private power companies.

He said the private power and infrastructure board has hired consultants to work on the final tariff of the public and private power plants to be charged to the consumers. He said that the impact of new private power projects on consumer tariff will start from the end of 1995 when some projects will start commissioning.

He said that after 7-12-1994 total 444 villages throughout the country were electrified. [passage omitted]

Cabinet Condemns Kashmir Governor's Rule Extension

BK1602013895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0100 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet has condemned the extension of the governor's rule in occupied Kashmir. At its meeting in Muzaffarabad, the cabinet described the Indian action as a violation of the international convention on human rights. It appealed to the United Nations to take note of the massive violations of human rights by Indian forces in occupied Kashmir. The cabinet observed that peace cannot be established in South Asia without resolving the Kashmir dispute.

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